

THE MYSTERY OF VERSAILLES

A Complete Solution

By

J. R. STURGE-WHITING

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To those of you who have encouraged me as much in fruitless endeavour as in my modest triumphs, to those before whom I need assume no role, adopt no pose, and who will at once recognise their inclusion herein, this book is dedicated.—J.R.S.W.

FOREWORD

THE solving of the Versailles puzzle was long overdue, and psychical researchers are indebted to Mr. Sturge-Whiting for devoting so much time and trouble to its elucidation. He will not be thanked for his pains. *An Adventure*, the record of the Trianon visit, is one of the classics of psychic literature, and even the most sceptical student of the alleged miraculous has been almost forced to accept a paranormal explanation of the "visions", failing a rational solution to the mystery. Well, here it is. The more credulous will not accept Mr. Sturge-Whiting's answer to the Versailles legend, and shouts of "Iconoclast!" will be raised. So *many* people prefer the "bunk" to the "debunk"! The fact that *An Adventure* has stood its ground for nearly thirty years without being seriously attacked is proof of how strong a *prima facie* case was made out for the "phenomena". It is also proof of what an excellent piece of work Mr. Sturge-Whiting has accomplished.

The analysis of the occurrences as recorded in *An Adventure* has not been easy, as I know from experience. In the winter of 1934 I was in Paris and made a similar attempt, but found I could not devote the necessary leisure to so important a task. Dr. C. E. M. Joad and I, map in hand,

followed the paths traversed by Miss Jourdain and Miss Moberly, hoping to glean some new information, or make some discovery that would throw light on the mystery ; but we realised that much time would have to be spent in the neighbourhood of the Trianon, and I abandoned the idea. This was fortunate, because Mr. Sturge-Whiting has now done the job so effectively.

Why has the Versailles mystery persisted for so long ? Only because of the academic standing of the two ladies who presented it to a credulous world. When, in 1911, I read the history of the case, I anticipated that it would become a major problem for psychists solely on account of this fact. Quite rightly, Mr. Sturge-Whiting has not impugned the good faith of the authors of *An Adventure*. But he has proved that they wrongly interpreted what they saw and heard on that memorable visit to the Petit Trianon. He has also proved that faulty perception, lapses of memory, an irresistible subconscious urge to accept a supernormal explanation of an occurrence when a normal one was available, plus a certain credulity, are the real reasons why we ever heard of the "adventure" at all. And if the two adventurers had devoted more time in trying to rationalise what they saw instead of spending ten years seeking evidence to support their belief in a miracle, I should not now be writing this Foreword.

To sum up, the impartial reader who has

carefully studied the arguments both for and against the Versailles story is faced with two alternatives: he can either believe that large blocks of personal experience were displaced from their proper positions in Time or that the two ladies were the victims of a self-deceptive phenomenon. I have no doubt about what his choice will be.

HARRY PRICE.

*19, Berkeley Street,
Mayfair, W.1*

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PREFACE

"The visions of the two authoresses of *An Adventure* will remain a classic case for all time on account of its production of questions which have never had to be discussed before or since."—*Morning Post*.

"WE record these things in order that they may be considered whenever the time shall come when a full explanation may become possible." Thus Miss Moberly at the end of the preface to *An Adventure*.

It might well be considered that on this note of simple sincerity the very beautiful story she tells should be left in peace. A few months ago I had hoped to write differently, but an intensive study of the Trianon mystery has now rendered this impossible. Faced with *The Adventure* in the course of a sceptical study of recent philosophies, I found myself compelled either to dismiss it or recast the greater part of my almanac of slow progress. As it stands, Miss Moberly's story is unique, and, like St. Paul, I have only too recently been counted in the forefront of its ardent protagonists—which, by virtue of precedent in such cases, may account for the sincerity of my present attitude. For to me the epic story has assumed the colour of pathetic illusion, though never for one moment have I questioned the author's integrity.

It demanded more courage than I care to admit before the considerable edifice involving the patient work of half a lifetime could be dismissed as illusionary, and my conviction has made me wonder how often, and in how many directions, can one be blinded to the truth through reverence either for the established order or the weight of authority as represented by its worthy upholders.

In view of the transparent and unassailable honesty of the authors, their tireless and scholarly construction of the case, and the unique support of apparent confirmation which has been built up, the intellectual revolt against its rejection has been formidable indeed.

Had Miss Moberly been still living, and could she read what follows, it is possible that she would have dismissed it with the same remark as appears in her handwriting at the foot of a press-cutting in the Bodleian Library, amongst her carefully arranged original documents, "Not worth answering"—and it would seem certain that, in her view, at the time of the story's first publication nothing less than a supernatural explanation of *The Adventure* would have caused her the slightest interest. Both she and Miss Jourdain had built for themselves a case so impregnable as to be, for them, beyond all question, and in attempting to shatter it I am fully aware of the implications which might attach to the principles involved. Indeed, this aspect of the case has caused me considerable

misgiving. For if by a process of reasoning and a study of the psychological issues involved one can damage an edifice of such quality, what indeed is safe?

- It happened that at the time of my recent work in this field I had been reading Frank Morison's *Who Moved the Stone?* It was not long before I entertained a strong suspicion that this book and *An Adventure* had much in common—although dealing with widely different subjects—both pursuing a course strangely alike in logical progress and synthetic construction.

One could, for instance, detach paragraphs from each, almost identical in structure and purpose, whilst the similarity in general appeal on innumerable points is at times most noticeable.

Consider these two paragraphs :

"I picture him running out and calling to them as they retreated, 'Don't be frightened, you seek ~~him on Nazareth~~. He is not here, behold ! The place where they laid him !'" notes 22

And this :

"We learned that there was a tradition that in October 1789 a messenger was sent to Trianon to warn the Queen of the approach of the mob from Paris. . . . Suddenly we heard a man running behind us. He shouted, 'Mesdames ! Mesdames !'"

Both books seek to support a similar if widely

separated theme, and both might therefore submit to parallel treatment at the hands of a sceptical critic. All this renders my task less attractive, if none the less necessary.

It is with some hesitation that I, a layman, feel justified in approaching a subject of this nature, so essentially a field for experts ; though on reflection it would appear that there are few fields more favourable to the still small voice of uninformed opinion than that of metaphysical truth, since in no other domain does one find such flat contradiction amongst the giants, nor so wide a gulf between the standpoints they occupy.

In considering phenomena of occult import I am invariably reminded of the old proverb "the exception proves the rule", since at best all psychic phenomena if they ever existed objectively are essentially in the nature of exceptions. I would almost go so far as to say that in their exceptional incidence they are themselves the strongest evidence of their own impossibility !—since as essentially exceptional, what of the rule ?

Consider Sir Oliver Lodge's brilliant comment. If, he points out, one accepts the statement that a certain town was totally destroyed by fire or volcano, and *not a living thing survived*, and then subsequently a stray sheep or goat was found wandering amidst the ruins—does not this isolated exception strengthen the rule to all Eternity ?

It was on account of The Adventure's total dissimilarity from all other alleged phenomena, and the number of strangely contradictory

speculations occasioned by its challenge, that I at once recognised it as unsuited to treatment along the lines I had utilised to dispose of such stumbling-blocks as spiritualism and telepathy, both of which I had rejected after long study and patient consideration.

The story contains, it must be admitted, the ring of truth, not to mention the exceptional qualifications of its authors to present a case as free from obvious criticism as anything ever recorded. Yet the very magnitude of its implied speculations seemed to present a challenge which must be met if hopeless confusion were to be avoided.

It is one of the greatest tributes to *The Adventure* that so few serious attempts have ever been made to provide an answer which will bear the light of serious consideration. And even now I doubt whether anything at all convincing could be offered in explanation outside the scope of a considerable volume. Since it is only by meeting the authors on their own ground, demolishing stone by stone the structure so arduously erected, that one can drive a wedge of effective criticism which could hope to shake the foundations of their work.

In the following pages, therefore, I shall endeavour to criticise the remarkable story of *The Adventure* from every relevant angle, since in view of the facts as they stand some explanation is necessary.

It is not usual for intelligent women to spend

half a lifetime in pursuit of a mere fantasy, and to offer their findings to a sceptical world. What, then, was the basis of this carefully substantiated story?

Where lay the cunning twist which welded a mass of non-essentials into a fixed and unalterable conviction?

Who lit the burning flame which fired and sustained the authors through eleven years of painstaking research, and induced them to offer such a tale?

These last questions again recall the central and most provocative challenge presented by Mr. Morison's *Who Moved the Stone?*

"Only from an intensely heated centre of burning zeal could this vast field of lava have been thrown out from a tiny country like Palestine to the limits of the Roman World. . . . What that experience was, whether it was physical, psychological, or both, or some transient happening outside the sphere of our immediate knowledge—is the crux of our present study."

Can it be that which serves for one is also applicable to the other? If so, there may be something in the reasoning I shall advance which reaches far beyond the limits of an alleged vision at Versailles.

An Adventure, on which this book is based, was first published in 1911 by Macmillan and Company. In 1931 it was published in the Readers' Library by Faber and Faber. The latest edition appeared in 1937.

CHAPTER I

THE STORY AS WE HAVE IT

THE story of *The Adventure* is based initially on the signed statements of Miss Moberly and Miss Jourdain which were written independently in 1901, some few months after the occurrence itself, a fact which will receive further consideration, and lodged finally in the Bodleian Library. The crux of the whole problem centres round a combined visit to the Trianon made on August 10th, 1901, though the book also refers to minor experiences which occurred later in or near the same vicinity.

In brief, the following is what we are asked to believe.

Early in August 1901 Miss Anne Moberly, head of an Oxford women's college, had occasion to be staying for a few weeks in Paris.

It was the year of the first great International Exhibition, and she had gone over to spend a holiday with a friend, Miss Jourdain, who at that time occupied her own flat in the French capital.

Both these ladies were associated with educational interests in this country, and they looked forward to enjoying a leisurely tour of the historical and architectural sights of Paris.

Neither of them, at that time, possessed anything beyond the ordinary tourist's knowledge of the city.

It was agreed between them that the mornings and afternoons should be devoted to sight-seeing excursions, and that they should go each evening to the Exhibition, which was then attracting huge crowds of visitors from all parts of the world.

On August 10th they decided to spend the afternoon at Versailles, and as in those days it took a considerable time to reach the Palace itself by train and tram, the afternoon had advanced by the time they had walked through the immense salons and corridors and had sat down to rest against the open windows overlooking the great gardens.

There still seemed time, however, to visit the Trianons, of which, of course, both ladies had heard, though neither knew anything further of them than that they had been used by Marie-Antoinette for pleasure purposes, and that they were smaller residences inside the Palace grounds.

They ascertained from Baedeker's guide the general direction in which the Trianons lay, and for the first time learned that there were two so-named establishments, the smaller of which appeared to be the more interesting. They therefore set out to walk towards the position indicated in the guide-book map, which led them straight down the great gardens, alongside the ornamental waters, and into a thickly wooded glade. It was a sunny afternoon and a fresh wind was blowing.

Following what they considered to be the right direction, they came to a long, low building on their left, which they took for the Grand Trianon. Having passed it, they noticed a wide green avenue on their right, perfectly deserted. Had they followed this it would have brought them direct to the front entrance of the Petit Trianon, but they took, instead, a narrow lane leading straight on through a thickly wooded glade.

At this point a feeling of depression seemed to come over them, though at the time neither mentioned it to the other. The wind seemed to drop, and the trees and scenery took on an unreal artificial aspect, to use their own words, "as though painted on canvas".

They came to some farm-buildings, and met two officials dressed in green uniforms, whom they took to be gardeners. They asked one of these men the way to the house, and were directed somewhat bluntly to continue straight on. Miss Moberly was afterwards able to describe the two men in great detail, both as to appearance, bearing, and dress.

The whole place had by this time assumed a condition of sullen stillness, though neither of the ladies referred to it. Passing some farm-buildings on their right, they noticed some farm implements, apparently discarded, *a plough*, and a cottage, outside which Miss Jourdain, only, remembered seeing a woman and child.

At this point they heard the sound of running footsteps, and a young man wearing a green cloak

appeared with great suddenness immediately behind them. He was out of breath, and did not seem to have come along either of the adjacent paths. He at once began to give them rapid directions, telling them not to turn left, but to turn right, and "*Cherchez la maison.*" He said many other things as well, but so rapidly as to be almost unintelligible. Then the man ran away, and they heard the sound of his footsteps through the trees for some time after he was lost to sight.

The two ladies followed the young man's instructions, turned right, and entered a narrow grotto, at the opening to which was a stone kiosk. As they passed it they both noticed a repulsive-looking man who was sitting on the low surrounding wall. He was wearing a large sun-hat, and his face was heavily marked as with smallpox. He turned and looked at them, but said nothing. They followed the narrow path leading through the grotto ahead, and crossed a small footbridge which skirted a tiny waterfall on their right. They were on high ground until they reached an orchard-like meadow, from which, at last, the front of the Petit Trianon itself could be seen.

Miss Moberly noticed that the house was smaller than she had expected, and her interest in her surroundings at once became acute. In front of the house, sitting on the rough grass which grew right up to the terrace, a lady was sitting, apparently sketching. There seemed to

be nothing to sketch, but her attitude and the fact that she held a paper of some sort gave the impression that she was sketching. Her dress and general appearance were noted, and seemed in no way remarkable at the time.

They walked up to the north terrace by steps leading straight in front of them, and wandered round to the west side, looking for an entrance. The terrace continued on one level past the west windows and in front of another building adjacent.

Suddenly a door in this second building opened, and a young man ran out, banging the door behind him. He ran rapidly towards the two ladies and told them that they must not remain there, and he offered to escort them towards the main entrance. This he did, by leading them down from the terrace on the west side, through an opening and along the end of the broad green drive, which they should have taken before meeting the gardeners. After this they joined a party of French tourists, who were going round the house in charge of a guide. Later they took a carriage and returned to Versailles. They noticed during the short drive that the wind was blowing and everything again seemed fresh and natural.

Neither Miss Moberly nor Miss Jourdain mentioned the Trianon visit again for a week. When at last the subject was discussed, it seemed to dawn on them that something most extraordinary had happened.

Firstly, Miss Jourdain had not seen the sketch-

ing lady, though they had passed so close to her that they had actually to make a slight detour to reach the steps, nor had Miss Moberly noticed either the cottage or the plough.

Suspecting a major mystery, these two ladies were wise enough to write and sign, independently of each other, separate accounts of the visit, and to date them 1901.

Having done this, Miss Moberly went to Versailles again in January 1902. To her amazement the whole place had changed, or seemed to have changed. She could not find the grotto, nor was there any sign of the kiosk against which the repulsive-looking man had been sitting. There were no steps leading directly up to the terrace of the house, and the door through which the young man had rushed was quite invisible from where they had stood on account of an old wall which intervened. The meadow in front of the house looked different and clearer of trees than they had previously seen it, and the spot on which the lady had been sitting was now a well-kept drive, obviously not new.

The idea now struck Miss Moberly that in some manner, during the visit in 1901, they had wandered into the past, and had seen the Trianon exactly as it had been in 1789, the year in which Marie-Antoinette had spent her last summer there, and, further, that the lady seen sitting on the terrace might have been the Queen herself.

With this idea in mind it was natural, of course,

to clothe everything and everybody seen or remembered on the day in question with the apparel and demeanour of their historic counterparts, the two gardeners becoming officials of the Court, the two young men junior attendants, or similar, and the repulsive-looking man a suitable aristocrat likely to have access to the Queen's grottoes at that time.

Had the story ended here it would have caused little or no controversy, but it did nothing of the sort. In fact, this was only the beginning—the real adventure slowly unwinding before the authors' eyes during a period of some eleven subsequent years. For every aspect of the scenery noticed in 1901 was confirmed as having existed in 1789, though in actual fact it had long since altered or been destroyed.

No person living in 1901 could possibly have known the place in such detail as the author's subsequent inquiries were able to establish, for in every case where they asserted this or that to have been present, or absent, old documents have borne them out to the letter.

Even the names and history of the people they met were one by one identified and described in obscure papers which would ordinarily never again have seen the light of day.

The grotto through which they walked had been destroyed by Louis Philippe. The terrace they traversed on the west side of the house was replaced by a wall over a hundred years ago, and the only access to what proved to be the

chapel door (from which the man had run, banging it behind him) was removed long before 1901.

So careful were the principals in checking and double checking all the evidence which went to build up their remarkable case that it was not until 1911 that anything of it was published, when the whole story, now complete, appeared in their anonymous book *An Adventure*, a recent edition of which has since appeared in the names of the authors.

For a long time it was extremely difficult to obtain any information as to the detail arrangement of the Trianon gardens and outbuildings as they were in 1789.

However, by a stroke of good fortune there was found, in 1903, hidden up a chimney near Paris, an old map of the Trianon gardens, made about 1780 by the Queen's landscape gardener, Mique, who subsequently followed his mistress to the guillotine.

On examining this map closely it was possible to identify the vanished kiosk, the alleged grotto, the flat terrace in front of the chapel, and the cottage which Miss Jourdain saw and which has long since disappeared. An enlarged section of the map is reproduced in all editions of *An Adventure*.

The investigations, after dealing with a mass of exact documentary support for the story, also include a great deal of circumstantial contributory evidence. For instance, Miss Moberly and

Miss Jourdain in 1901 noticed that there seemed to be on all sides a tendency for the officials to regulate and guide visitors, and a general atmosphere of restrictions and suspicion of strangers. Actually, since the middle of the nineteenth century visitors to Versailles have been allowed to wander about where they liked, quite unmolested. But it would not have been so in 1789.

Then, again, even the repulsive-looking man seen sitting by the kiosk was eventually placed. In 1789 there had been at the Court of Louis Sixteenth a Creole, the comte de Vaudreuil. Much patient investigation on this point not only enabled a full description of this man to be unearthed, but even reference to his pock-marked complexion and that he was in the habit of wearing a sun-hat found support in contemporary records.

During the course of the long investigations Miss Jourdain visited the Trianon on numerous occasions, both in summer and winter. She took photographs and interviewed local authorities, always with the same positive results.

On two or three subsequent occasions she experienced a recurrence of the old strange conditions, and these instances will be referred to later. To my mind they form the weakest link in the remarkable chain, and in the best interests of the story should have been left out altogether.

It must be admitted that the foregoing résumé of the story of *The Adventure* does not do justice

to the challenge implied in its publication, as it is only on considering the apparently unsurmountable pile of confirmation that one is able to appreciate its unique strength. Let it be admitted that never before has such a proposition been offered in support of the apparently impossible. It is the arch ghost story of all time, and must have proved a stumbling-block to countless self-satisfied sceptics ever since its appearance, over twenty-five years ago.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

To speculate on the larger issues inherent in the acceptance or rejection of *The Adventure* is not within the scope of the present volume. Having, however, given the story as it concerns the main points—which, as I have already said, does little justice to its value as a whole, it might be as well to note the following. Its acceptance must of necessity involve issues so contradictory as to stagger the most vivid imagination. Far from being merely a claim to post-vision—a difficult enough conception in any case for most of us—*The Adventure* seeks to support physical and chronological phenomena quite beyond the reach of any recognised system—and that with a confusion of interdependence which complicates them to all eternity.

For instance, the authors' claim to have walked over terraces and high ground which have since disappeared, or been levelled, at a time when other visitors were presumably using the localities in their modern form ! What unthinkable superimposition could cover the requirements of the nearest "normal" visitor who followed the couple over the rustic bridge ?

Again : the historical persons whom they met,

though living presumably in the year 1789, were also appearing (and for a few moments *acting*) arbitrarily in the year 1901. And nothing is mentioned of the astonishment occasioned to the "gardener", for instance, when questioned by two beings from a remote future !

"They answered in a seemingly casual and mechanical way", says Miss Jourdain, in her first statement, and on repeating the question they only got the "same answer in the same manner".

It is just this complication of "impossible" suppositions, with their endless and confusing contradictions, which renders *The Adventure* unique in occult literature, and the urge either to explain it or justify it as it stands becomes almost overwhelming.

My attempts to do so have at last led me to the conclusion, somewhat reluctantly entertained, that the whole thing can be explained in natural terms.

Certain of the authors' observations must, of course, remain unanswered, since it is manifestly impossible after so long to parry successfully each and every point. If, however, I am able to offer the reader a picture more in keeping with common reason than would be necessary to the story's acceptance, even in principle, then I have achieved my object.

Notice first a very peculiar thing. The two ladies took their memorable walk on August 10th, 1901, returning to Paris the same evening. Both had seen people dressed in the unfamiliar

costumes of over a hundred years ago. Both had felt strangely depressed and uncomfortable for over half an hour, and were frightened simultaneously by the appearance of a repulsive-looking stranger seated in semi-darkness under the trees. Both had seen the scenery and trees become "fixed, and as though painted on canvas", and yet *neither mentioned any of these things to the other for over a week*. "Nor did I think about it."

May I here make one more quite unpardonable digression? It is to refer once again to a point in Mr. Morison's *Who Moved the Stone?* His "mysterious seven weeks", the weeks of silence which followed the crucifixion, at the *end* of which came the first recorded affirmation of the resurrection. A week . . . seven weeks?

The question which first raised the subject was casual enough!—coming as it did a week later, when the couple were back again in Paris. "Do you think that the Petit Trianon is haunted?" Miss Moberly asked. "Yes, I do," was the reply, and from that moment, casually at first, notice, but with increasing zeal, the two intrepid ladies commenced to build their remarkable case. That they built *backwards* no one will deny, and in its best interests this early reversal of progress is regrettable enough. Had one of them been sufficiently impressed at the time, and it seems incredible in view of what followed that this was not the case, local inquiries could no doubt have set the whole matter at rest within a few days. The trees would have still been in full

leaf, the waterfalls running at the same strength, the cultivated flowers and shrubs, which change so entirely in a season, still identifiable, whilst persons about the place could easily have been interrogated as to who and how many people had visited there that day.

Instead of this, with waning memory, Miss Jourdain makes the first of her next series of visits in the depth of winter on January 2nd, 1902.

Note, particularly, that it is her impressions on this visit which seem to consolidate and confirm the amazing theory subsequently advanced. And yet, curiously enough, she never once attempted to walk critically over the scene of her original experience—but, instead, spent the whole afternoon wandering about between the Trianon and the Hameau, where the “old feeling returned in full force”. Mysterious music permeated the air, and vague impressions of invisible crowds encompassed her on all sides; “a man clothed like those we had seen before” slipped smoothly through the trees. She was overtaken by a tall gardener (presumably ghostly) and “made my way from there to the French garden, without noticing the paths I took”. This is significant, as it refers to the section over which the ladies had their first experience, and would indicate that even in January 1902, with a memory faded by nearly six months’ interval, the details had not yet impressed themselves sufficiently to warrant even noticing the paths.

That evening Miss Jourdain heard related a

number of legends relating to ghostly apparitions at the Trianon, most of which coincided broadly with her most recent experiences.

It is noticeable here, for the first time, that Miss Jourdain, for some unaccountable reason, seemed totally unable to grasp her opportunities. She had gone to Versailles to confirm a growing conviction that it had been the scene of a remarkable vision. She had had six months in which to consider it from every angle, and would, under these circumstances, have been expected to welcome anything even remotely resembling the first strange impression. Yet she calmly describes this second strange adventure as though viewed without surprise or emotion, even to the odd details of the historic dress worn by farm-workers and others, instead of at once accosting, or attempting to interrogate, them with the leading questions so urgently necessary to her case.

Miss Moberly's second visit to the Trianon was on July 4th, 1904. She found everything changed, and could not locate the kiosk, the tiny bridge, nor the narrow grotto. It might here be noted, though I shall refer to it again, that she did on this occasion see the Belvedere (a type of kiosk), a rustic bridge, and ornamental waters.

Considering a lapse of three years, one stone kiosk, one rustic bridge, and one rock-sided walk would surely look very much like others of their kind in each case, when the first impression must of necessity have been rapid and casual, assuming no special reason to note detail. Yet she makes

much of this "difference", and of the fact that the area "seemed clearer of trees" and more open in character. Such a change of impression is universally familiar on second visits, where in many cases the same places seem almost unrecognisable, except in the most general aspect.

Much has been made of the detailed descriptions contained in the 1901 statement. I have myself spent *hours* trying to trace the various small scenes and corners described before fully appreciating that the pictures presented are essentially *retrospective*, and simply will not stand for analysis in the cold glare of contemporary daylight.

That cloistered court at my old school, which I can still picture theoretically in fullest detail, would look quite different today if I were to call in and wander through it again. It looked large, venerable, and impressive once, but it would probably strike me as small and quaintly unimpressive now.

When I first went to boarding-school I thought my father's house was large. It was, but it had shrunk to the dimensions of a tiny cottage on the first day of the holidays. Visual memory can be strangely deceptive—the standards are so infinitely elastic and change themselves from day to day.

In every sense the present "Rocher Bridge", near the Belvedere kiosk, is a small rustic bridge, though the description "tiny" might possibly be an exaggeration in terms. It crosses a narrow stream and today a sheet of water is immediately

on the left, there being no foliage nor trees to obscure it, though this might not have been so in 1901, in view of the constant pruning and general attention which is given daily to the gardens at this point.

Its whole setting suggests the description "grotto" from every angle, and it is situated in a position of deep shade and seclusion.

CHAPTER III

THE 1901 STATEMENTS

As we have noted already, the published story of *The Adventure* centres primarily in the two statements in writing made by Miss Jourdain and Miss Moberly in 1901. I almost unconsciously named Miss Jourdain first in this instance, since both statements appear in some vague manner to have been instigated by her, though nominally throughout the work Miss Moberly takes an implied seniority.

It might be as well to examine the two 1901 statements in some detail before proceeding further, and in setting out to do so certain observations at once become glaringly apparent.

In the first place, the statements are understood to be, and have been described as, "independent", and as far as their actual writing is concerned they certainly are. They were not even written on the same day, and were executed in different places, but they followed much mutual discussion, both in this country and in France, during the three months which elapsed before the decision to write them was finally arrived at.

There is no question as to the authorship and nominal independence of the documents, both of which I have examined minutely. One,

Miss Moberly's, is considerably longer than the other, and the handwriting of each is, of course, beyond question. They bear the date 1901, but it should be noticed that when they appear in print they are not strictly adhered to, though no actual claim is made on this point. The statements are so nearly identical with the published versions that few people, even if they read the two together, would regard the small difference as of any importance, since at most they could be regarded as paraphrases, with modifications in keeping with the style and requirements of the book.

On further reflection, however, it seems incredible that the authors should have allowed the smallest discrepancy to creep into the reproduction of these vital statements, especially in view of the obvious form in which likely destructive criticism would be expected to develop.

I shall refer to this in detail later, and for the moment must content myself with an examination of the statements as we have them, though I do not propose to reproduce them here in full.

It is important to remember that no less than three months had passed before anything at all was committed to writing, with the exception of a letter, descriptive of the Trianon visit to which Miss Moberly refers as having been written to someone in England at the time she first suggested to Miss Jourdain that the Trianon was haunted, and which must have been the last—and probably the only—written record of the afternoon's

experiences *before* either of the parties suspected anything unusual.

Where is that letter? And why, in view of all that followed, was it not immediately recovered for reference? No record is available to show that an attempt was made to recover it, and it does not seem to have occurred to anyone that it might well throw invaluable light on the early impressions so belatedly recorded!

The two statements have a "natural" variation in detail consistent with the observations of two different people who are together at the same scene; but it is difficult to overlook the fact that after so much mutual discussion they must, *ipso facto*, be to a large extent interdependent, however much each may have attempted to avoid it at the time of writing, and this must be borne well in mind when considering them in detail.

Now, considered broadly, remembering the lapse of time involved, and with regard to the implications inherent in this study, one is compelled to feel astonished at the wealth of detail so confidently recorded.

Further, the supernatural aspects of what the parties are supposed to have seen are described in such detail as to be wholly inconsistent with their first impressions of the place which, on their own admission, caused them not the slightest suspicion.

Imagine, for instance, having noticed that when the "running man" appeared he seemed to "grow out of the scenery", and when he "first

settled his feet on the ground" did so "with a little quiver of adjustment" (app. p. 116) without at the time thinking it in any way unusual !

And Miss Jourdain's statement. "I remember drawing my skirt away with a feeling as though someone were near and I had to make room, and then wondering why I did it." Such an impression might reasonably have been apparent at the time, but to recall a mere "feeling", even a week later, seems remarkable, to say the least, especially when no thought of anything unusual connected with the incident had crossed her mind during the interval.

It will be noticed that both statements agree largely as to the points at which the feeling of depression commenced and ended. One wonders

existence of a discrepancy amongst the earliest of the original documents in the case. There was no actual reason for this, excepting a growing dislike for the form and structure of certain aspects of the case. In view of this, a discovery I made on the occasion of my last search seems to have the greatest possible significance, since it bears on obscure points which had hitherto given me much trouble.

The reader will understand this better when I come to discuss the points in question, but it is enough for the moment to note that certain descriptive parts of the 1901 documents have been *left out of the published version*, whilst in one or two cases descriptive matter appears to have been added, inconspicuously, here and there.

Now, to me this appears indefensible. One would have at least expected that the original statements would have been word perfect in their ultimate form, even, if necessary, without regard to grammar and syntax; but the discrepancies exist. The most significant of these I will quote in full, though their importance may not be realised until later.

In Miss Jourdain's original statement we read : "In front of us was a slope, leading down to a stream, which on our right hand fell over stones, and was crossed by a rustic bridge."

Now, this has been omitted from the published version, and instead of this description we have Miss Moberly's as follows : "Silently we passed

over a small rustic bridge which crossed a tiny ravine. So close to us when on the bridge that we could have touched it with our right hands, a threadlike cascade fell from a height down a green pretty bank, where ferns grew between stones. Where the little trickle of water went to I did not see, but it gave me the impression that we were near other water, though I saw none."

Now as I shall claim that on the day in question the two ladies crossed the present Rocher Bridge, the discrepancy here is signally impressive.

But I find myself in a still stronger position in noting a sentence in Miss Jourdain's statement which, conveniently enough, has not been re-printed. It reads as under :

"As we walked, I found myself wondering whether anyone had ever stumbled over from the path into the water on our left."

What water? Miss Moberly noticed none. According to her, she was walking in a narrow grotto on a bridge over a tiny artificial cascade, the water from which ran downwards towards some *unseen* pool? Miss Jourdain actually felt the necessity for care in avoiding a fall into the water on her left.

The present Rocher Bridge crosses a stream, coming apparently from the right, and skirts a considerable stretch of water on its left, quite deep enough in appearance to look unattractive as an involuntary bathing-pool. So that though

neither of the statements describes the setting of the bridge correctly, Miss Jourdain does so in a passage which has been *left out of the published version*.

A further difference between the two versions of the statements detracts little from the uncertainty as to the true nature of the locality, for in Miss Jourdain's final version of the scene, apparently added later, we read :

"We walked on, crossing a small bridge that went across a green bank high on our right hand and shelving down below as to a very small over-shadowed pool of water glimmering some way off. A tiny stream descended from above us, so small as to seem to lose itself before reaching the little pool."

So with this passage we get back to the tiny stream and almost invisible pool, and hear no further of the near-by water mentioned in the original statement.

Now, with these conflicting descriptions in mind I will give you an impression of the bridge as I saw it this year, using approximately the same number of words and similar treatment.

From the north side I approached a slope leading to a small rustic bridge which crossed a little stream flowing under it to the lake on my left. It fell over stones, forming a miniature cascade before reaching the lake itself. On the right of the bridge, so close that I could have touched it, was a rugged, precipitous rock with irregular crevices and small caves opening into

it. It towered up high above the bridge, and looked damp and cool. At the end of the bridge the tiny path led through a narrow grotto apparently cut in the rock itself.

That is the present Rocher Bridge and its setting ; which in retrospect becomes to Miss Moberly and Miss Jourdain the vanished grotto and artificial waterfall.

I agree with Miss Moberly that the whole place "has a sombre look suggestive of dampness", and I noticed that even on a hot summer day it was so dark as to render photography difficult with an ordinary camera—the photograph I took there last August failing to come out clearly due to under-exposure.

Had neither of the ladies noticed the very prominent stretch of water which lies adjacent to the bridge, one might have considered the matter differently, and in the published version of the statements no such water is mentioned. But the unpublished and very clear description of a feeling of danger in falling into deep water would seem to stamp both later descriptions as unreliable, and is *exactly in accordance with the facts*. It *would* be quite possible to slip from the path, and I could well imagine a woman accustomed to taking charge of young children feeling the sense of danger there.

Again, in the 1901 statement Miss Jourdain describes the person who came across the terrace to direct them in these terms : ". . . until a boy came out and directed us to go to the other

entrance". But in the published version of her separate account we have : "While we were on the terrace a boy came out of the door of a second building which opened on it, and I still have the sound in my ears of his slamming it behind him."

This description of a sound would be remarkably vivid if used some hours after the event. Surely after at least four months, and probably very much longer, it is exaggeration beyond all reason? It appears, I think, however, in the Moberly statement from the first and would tend to support the theory that if the statements are nothing else, they are essentially collaborative, if not consciously so, and indeed after so much mutual discussion in the interim I fail to see how they could possibly be otherwise.

Again, on the question of the "running man" we find a small but significant addition in Miss Jourdain's final account which does not appear in the original :

"I do not remember the dress, except that the material was dark and heavy," to which in the published version is added, "and that the man wore buckled shoes."

There may be other slight differences between the original and the later statements, but there would not appear to be anything of great importance. I have not had long enough to check the wording to the letter, and I noted that quite naturally some of the less important parts of the statement were paraphrased without, I think, losing anything of their meaning.

By far the most important single discrepancy appears to be the reference by Miss Jourdain to the close presence of a sheet of water, since this is the only mention of it as it refers to this part of the story, and in my opinion fixes the locality of the bridge irrevocably. In fact, both accounts, with this included, are fairly good after-descriptions of a walk over the Rocher Bridge, and I am certain that I could have given nothing more accurate from memory if I had crossed it as they did with no reason to make a special note of its topography.

With these and unimportant minor exceptions, the 1901 statements appear to have been faithfully reproduced.

CHAPTER IV

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

MUCH has been made throughout by the authors of *An Adventure* of what one might describe as the "atmosphere" of the place, and for my part I feel there is much to say on this point necessary to an understanding of its constant stress. Shortly after commencing a detailed study of the Trianon Mystery, I happened to read an article in the *Autocar* written by Miss Helen McKie in which she describes a three-day trip to Paris by road. She and her friend motored to Versailles and, after parking the car, proceeded on foot for a visit to the Palace.

"The gloomy day," she writes, "threatening rain, had its compensations, for with the exception of the attendants and an odd gardener or so we had Versailles to ourselves." Both attendants and odd gardeners appear so often and so significantly in *An Adventure* that I was anxious to read further.

"No one can fail to be impressed with the grandeur and dignity of Versailles, however many times he may have been there. The atmosphere vibrates with the majesty of the ancien régime coupled with a *feeling of tragedy which at times becomes almost overwhelming.*

"We wandered through those wooded avenues . . . and eventually arrived at the Petit Trianon, which, in spite of its dignified simplicity, seemed to look out with tragic reproachful eyes from its blank shuttered windows. . . . The whole produced an air of wistful gaiety. . . . *I wonder what it is that produces that profound air of tragedy over Versailles.* It cannot be accounted for entirely by the fate of the unhappy Louis Sixteenth and his beautiful queen. *It seems to go deeper than that.*"

In a much more general way these very practical tourists seem to have caught something of the feeling which induced Miss Moberly and her friend to endow the place with special influences, without in any way suggesting that they were other than entirely subjective. I suggest that, though quite different, this frank description of the influence of Versailles and its surroundings is equally impressive and much more accurate than that of many passages in the book in question. But having no other "axe to grind", our motoring friends unconsciously get nearer a true description of the "feeling of depression" than was possible to two visitors who had convinced themselves they had been in the presence of the supernatural.

Neither description is far wrong, though presented so differently.

I myself felt it twice this year. But it was not then due either to the tragedy of the monarchy or to anything inherent in the surroundings, but entirely accountable to my late absorption in

the mystery under consideration, which at that time, as far as I was concerned, had still to be explained. I felt the strangest reluctance to enter certain sections of the grounds, which on both occasions were quite deserted, and though knowing it to be completely irrational, even a tendency to scrutinise obvious American tourists, when they did turn up in the afternoon, in a laughable attempt to discover some oddity about their dress or demeanour which would stamp them as irregular or peculiar. Not too difficult, I may say, considering the outfits some Americans affect abroad in heat-waves !

The effect of stillness amongst large trees when there is no wind is easy to appreciate, as also one could at times picture the dark background "painted on canvas", especially in the region of the Belvedere and at the back of the English garden.

The Trianon itself does look "unnatural" with its silent and reproachful air. It is unnatural for a house of this size and type to remain furnished, standing in its own well-kept grounds, yet uninhabited except by the poignant memories of the past. Look at the photograph of it from the north side and you will catch something of what I am trying to describe.

"There were no effects of light and shade," Miss Moberly remarks, "and no wind stirred the trees. It was intensely still." But remember that the English garden where this impression appeared the strongest is protected on the north

side by large trees, on the south by the Trianon itself and its outbuildings, whilst the Rocher Bridge and the site of the ancient grottoes lie in a deep basin where even a gale would barely penetrate.

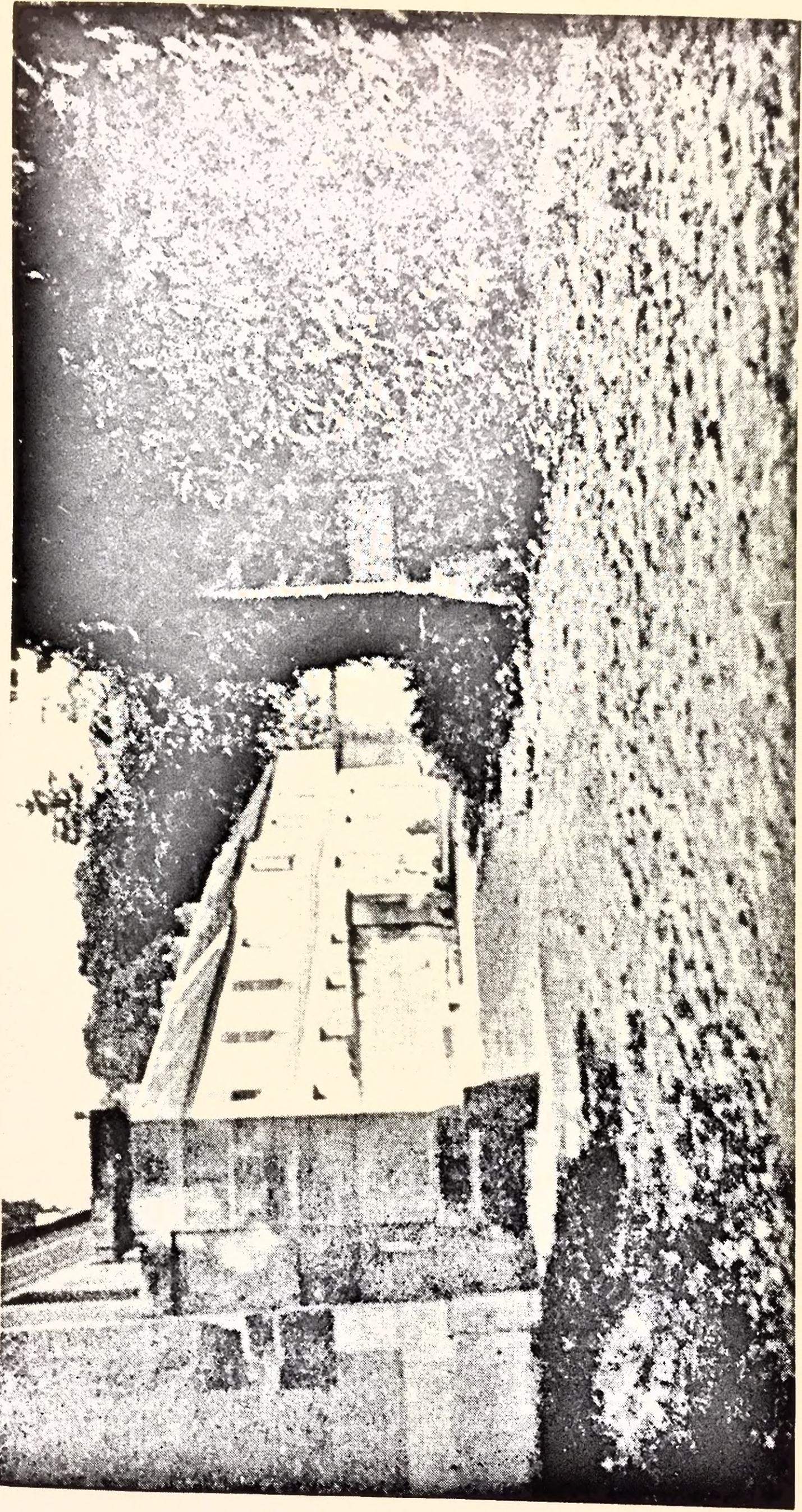
Finally, arriving outside the house after going through it with a guide, Miss Moberly remarks that everything again was fresh and natural, and that owing to the wind she put on her coat. I took careful note when I was there and remarked specially that whilst there was a light breeze blowing across the open park towards the southern entrance to the house itself, not a breath of wind penetrated the gardens at the other side. I walked rapidly from one side to the other several times to confirm this.

Now, a feeling of depression is a very vague thing to define except on a purely subjective basis. It is extremely doubtful whether any locality has attached to it an atmosphere calculated to depress persons entering its field of influence, except for reasons at once apparent either to the normal emotions or reason of the observer. One can be hopelessly depressed by a musical comedy, or, I imagine, fail to feel so at a funeral, if the right person is being disposed of! Yet Miss Moberly and Miss Jourdain are certainly under the impression that the influence was objective in character, and attached to certain clearly defined limits and localities. Miss Jourdain particularly refers on several occasions to "entering a field of influence" just as real as

are both convinced that something outside their own minds accounted for the feelings they suffered, when clearly, apart from the normal reactions of educated persons to such surroundings, this could not have been the case. Both speak of a return of the feelings when *thinking over the experience*, evidence in itself as to the purely subjective nature of their first impressions.

It might be noted here the readiness with which Miss Jourdain was willing to listen to legends and unfounded rumours current in Paris at the time.

During the autumn of 1901 she wrote to Miss Moberly on several points bearing on the investigation which was then just starting. In her letter she quotes an entirely unproved story that the Queen was to be seen at the Trianon on a certain day in August, and that all the other inhabitants of that time occupied their accustomed places for a day and a night. I forget her exact wording, but she seriously suggests



am perhaps anticipating a generalisation I hope to make later, it would seem that the whole history of France must be combed and scratched for anything which would meet the facts of their amazing allegations, wherein may lie the key to the whole mystery, since with such vast resources, granted the indomitable will to succeed, it could only be a matter of time before each and every vacancy was suitably filled.

In 1789, for instance, there were attached to the Court something like six hundred and fifty major members either living in the Palace or the town, and we are not told how many per-

1789. The chapel man was one. He must be found. Without going a step further, assuming a list of the names of the Trianon staff in that year, which was readily obtainable, it was merely a question of choosing a young one, housing him in the attic over the chapel door, and giving him an obvious reason for interfering with anyone on the terrace.

Imagine going one afternoon to Hampton Court and mixing freely with the visitors, speaking to some, noticing others. Return to London, and a week later go to the British Museum or elsewhere and study the intimate history of Henry Eighth and his home life at some selected date. It would certainly not be long before you were able to find a part for each of your selected actors, even if you had not at the time been able to clothe them suitably! Granted an unexpected retrospect, and the case is surely parallel.

I am strongly inclined to date the birth of the illusion, destined eventually to become *The Adventure*, to the moment during the Paris conversation when one or the other of its authors first recalled the "running man". The general idea of "haunting" was touched on, and details of the Trianon visit would be mutually recalled.

"And do you remember how that fellow near the kiosk suddenly appeared?" I can imagine one of them saying, to which the other would reply, "Yes, he seemed to come from nowhere,

didn't he? It was curious." "And now I come to think of it, wasn't he dressed rather unusually? Did you notice where he went afterwards? Seemed to disappear into thin air. . . . But he called out after us—he shouted, 'Mesdames.'"

Two women suddenly confronted by an unknown man who seemed afterwards to have appeared from nowhere. . . .

Two women remembering a visit to a tomb in the early hours of the morning. . . . He shouted, "Mesdames."

"He saith unto her, 'Mary.'"

Llewellyn Powys, faced with a not dissimilar speculation in the course of a critical examination not without parallel, makes these comments :

"How, then, did the story of the resurrection get spread abroad? It must be remembered that the accounts we have of it were written down long after the event was imagined to have taken place. People either believe in the resurrection or they do not. They either know it to be true or know it not to be true. For a lover of wisdom to accept such an occurrence, the most infallible proofs would have to be accessible. They are not. . . . Inherent in man's nature is the disposition to be gulled. . . . It is impossible to hold the theory that the rumour was the result of a deliberate invention."

In that shifting and uncertain sand was the

seed sown and nurtured, later in full stature to add its obscuring and deceptive shadow to the rest? For in some such way the strange conviction stirred and lived; tended by honest hands to blossom at the end of eleven years as The Adventure.

CHAPTER V

ACTIVE RESEARCH

It was not until January 1902 that any active researches were made on the spot by either of the principals, and on the second day of that month Miss Jourdain made a special visit to Versailles with the object, at last, of attempting a first-hand "check-up" on the various details which had been under discussion for over five months.

Her account of this visit seems to me most unsatisfactory in many directions. Instead of going at once to the area in which the adventure was supposed to have taken place, she spent the whole afternoon in the region of the Hameau, only once crossing a corner of the area covered on the famous walk during August, and then taking little or no account of what she saw there. This not only delayed confirmation of details which must only too rapidly have been fading from her memory, but served if anything to introduce new elements of doubtful value calculated to obstruct rather than clarify the issue.

She would have defended this action, I think, by pointing out that at the time it had not occurred either to her or Miss Moberly that the scenery as well as the inhabitants of the Trianon

had changed since they saw them in 1901. This is clearly indicated in the book itself, and whilst in some ways it tends to justify inadequate and wrongly concentrated investigation, it lengthens the all-important interval between the original experiences and their alleged confirmation, a matter of vital importance where questions of visual memory are concerned.

In her preface to *An Adventure* Miss Edith Olivier is careful to point out :

“The fact was that in the early days the scenery had not appeared to them interesting enough *to be remembered*, and unless they turned back to the original narratives they forgot that those points which had now come into prominence had been there in the background from the first.”

This position at least throws even more responsibility upon the wording of the 1901 statements, which, as I have pointed out, show serious discrepancies in several important details as they stand, whilst they themselves make no claim to have ever been written down before November 1901, three months after the first visit. Further, Miss Moberly has not hesitated many years later in making additional observations on the question of the scenery as she saw it in 1901, and in her preface elaborates on the appearance of the alleged grotto and what could be seen from it, etcetera, in terms outside the original statement.

In October the writer made a further journey

to Versailles with a view to confirming a number of points still in doubt, and spent most of the afternoon of Sunday the twenty-fourth covering the ground on which Miss Jourdain had her second experience, and which is fully described in *The Adventure*, Chapter II.

Referring to this account, we find that Miss Jourdain made this special visit in the depths of winter in January 1902, and made straight for the path which leads to the Temple de l'Amour, presumably to ascertain whether it bore any resemblance to the original kiosk which she said she had seen in August 1901. If we accept this reason—and I can, under the circumstances, see no other—the question of a change of scenery must have already occurred to her—a fact which wholly contradicts her action later in the day when she passed over the original ground “without noticing which paths I took” (page 62).

“On crossing the bridge which leads to the Hameau,” she remarks, “the old feeling returned in full force ; it was as if I had crossed a line and was suddenly in a circle of influence.”

She noticed some labourers and a cart. “The men wore tunics and capes with pointed hoods. . . . I turned aside for an instant—not more—to look at the Hameau, and when I looked back, men and cart were completely out of sight.”

I stood on this spot and tried to visualise her experience as so carefully recorded. There were no workmen or carts to be seen, but the way in which groups of visitors appeared and dis-

appeared amongst the trees could easily have given an impression similar to that which Miss Jourdain regarded as evidence of supernatural appearances. The whole setting lends itself to uncertain identification of both stationary and moving objects, and anyone in the right mood for self-deception could find few places better suited to its incidence.

In spite of the reason for her visit, she remarks in this connection : "I did not dwell upon any part of the incident, but went on to the Hameau."

I can but pass over the amazing description which follows this observation as purely imaginary, and since it is not included in any part of the subsequent confirmatory researches it is quite impossible to deal with it objectively. I refer of course to the sound of women's voices, the impression of invisible crowds, and the echo of distant music, etcetera.

Had we been dealing only with records relating to subjective experiences, records of dreams and the like, there would have been little or nothing to differentiate the story of The Adventure from the plethora of occult data which still pours into the editorial departments of nearly every kind of newspaper and journal—data which I am strongly inclined to dismiss *in toto* as manifestations of mass self-deception, accountable to our ignorance of the more subversive aspects of the human mind. I must, therefore, except in so far as the allegations of concrete confirmation are concerned, ignore all,

or nearly all, even in this story, which stands unsupported by subsequent findings of a tangible nature.

When, therefore, in the narration of Miss Jourdain's second visit, she again becomes more concrete in her presentations, it is possible to proceed further.

After meeting and talking to a gardener to whom we shall refer again, she found herself in a wood of very tall trees with such high thick undergrowth that she could not see through it (page 101). She describes the position of this wood with some accuracy, and remarks that it was interspersed with paths running this way and that, which seemed to lead nowhere in particular. Now, during subsequent visits, both ladies failed apparently to locate or identify this wood, or recognise its described characteristics, assuming *inter alia* that it had been cut down within the last hundred years, but had existed in 1789 in the form in which Miss Jourdain saw it.

I spent a great deal of time in the locality in question, and came to the conclusion that, allowing for the lapse of years, the present time of year, and the apparent procedure as to forestry and clearance work in the area, the wood in question is still, and was at the time of Miss Jourdain's visit, just as might be expected under the circumstances, or substantially as she described it in 1902. Her reference to thick undergrowth was not at first easy to explain away, but became so at once when I discovered a

section so thickly grown over with high blackberry bushes as to be quite impassable, and other very large areas ending abruptly along straight sections where cutting had been arrested by the end of the week's clearance work, still thickly studded with the short stubs of millions of similar trees.

There seems therefore ample evidence to support the contention that if a wood with thick undergrowth was noticed by Miss Jourdain in 1902, it was entirely in accordance with the then probable condition of the place, assuming that at the time clearance work in that section had not been recently completed. If, for instance, the area I examined, as near as possible to the described spot, were allowed to grow up unchecked for some months only, the condition would again be exactly in accordance with her original picture, and have, therefore, not the slightest significance to the case in question.

In view of this, the tireless research dealing with the point in question which probably proves fairly conclusively that a thick wood did exist there in 1789 becomes singularly unimpressive.

Miss Moberly remarks that in the gardeners' wages book for 1789 the gatherings-up and occasional burnings of undergrowths in a wood (apparently in this part of the garden) are alluded to (National Archives O1 1876). And on my visit to the Hameau this year I counted the remains of over seven bonfires on the newly cleared areas, clearly showing the extent of the

clearance work still in progress and supporting my contention that little or no change either physical or in relation to procedure is likely to have taken place here even since the time of Louis Sixteenth, who is known to have taken a personal interest in the park and its maintenance.

She also triumphantly states that in Mique's map of 1783 the wood with its diverging paths can be plainly seen. "It is approached by the two bridges over the river, and stretches towards the hill on which the Orangerie stands." Which description, with the allowances I have just enumerated, is an accurate portrayal of the present nature and location of the place.

One more word in this connection. Miss Jourdain seems to attach importance to the difficulty she had in finding her way amongst the confusing paths at a time when the undergrowth was thick and impenetrable. I myself, in spite of the recent clearances, and in a mood of great concentration, with map in hand, failed on two occasions to use the same actual paths when trying to retrace my steps to and from the Orangerie, and would certainly have experienced the same confusion had I walked there before the clearances had been made. The area is essentially formless and difficult to visualise in the absence of local landmarks.

During the walk through the wood, Miss Jourdain states that she heard the sound of a stringed band drifting past her from the house.

The sounds were very soft and intermittent (page 102). "She could afterwards write down from memory about twelve bars" in the key of A flat, but without all the inner harmonies.

Now, it is greatly to the credit of the author that even this vague statement was investigated with tireless energy. "The bars were shown to a musical expert, who said that the bars could hardly all belong to one another, but that the idiom dated from about 1780" (page 103).

A search was started through a mass of unpublished music in the Conservatoire de Musique in Paris, where the twelve bars were eventually "recognised" as forming the motif of a light opera of the eighteenth century. A list of possible compositions is given in *The Adventure*, several of which had been played at the Trianon theatre in 1780. Note here that the eternal 1789 is for once abandoned in favour of an earlier date.

Now, on this question I can only speak from personal experience, and as far as I can see it would be difficult otherwise to obtain any sort of ruling likely to be helpful to the case. I maintain that it would be impossible for anyone to retain in memory twelve bars of an entirely unknown air, unless at once recorded or sung persistently until an opportunity for doing so presented itself. Instead of this, we know that after hearing the music Miss Jourdain continued her lengthy walk, talked to a gardener, and, if I read her correctly, made inquiries in Versailles on other matters before she attempted to commit

the music to writing, whilst we have no record of her attempting to keep the fleeting and uncertain air in mind by humming it to herself or recording it on the spot.

It is well known that in many nervous disorders, and in most cases of high fever, for instance, the patient hears, or thinks he hears, some sort of music filtering through his brain. It is, I believe, caused by the passage of blood through the inner ear, and aggravated naturally by reminiscent factors latent in everyone, and especially in the minds of musicians, a distinction implied in the record, in so far as Miss Jourdain was able to give a technical identification afterwards.

To me the whole incident and its subsequent examination is an indication of the extravagant measures adopted by the authors where even the remotest considerations are concerned. And apart from direct influence of the incident, or its value in estimating the issue as a whole, it strikes me as redundant and unworthy of the major items in the catalogue of evidential *considerata*.

The question of music is raised again in the latter part of Miss Moberly's book where she records the experiences of an American family living in Versailles, though in this case less definite attempts are made to substantiate the claims concerned.

I shall deal with the matter of Miss Jourdain's meeting and conversation with the tall gardener

under another section, but one thing becomes at once apparent in this instance—the strange and incredible lack of enterprise displayed in the face of such an opportunity, by which, as far as I can see, the very essence of the whole mystery might well have been examined and located at first hand. Unless, indeed, once again, the realisation of abnormality came *afterwards*—the fatal tendency which marks the course of the whole story.

Before leaving the question of Miss Jourdain's walk in 1902, I would like to refer to the feelings of compulsion to which she alludes when unable to make up her mind which paths to take and which direction to follow in the region of the woods. Since visiting Versailles I have heard from a lady interested in the subject that a similar feeling came over her in what I gather to be much the same locality. She tells me that at one point where the paths diverged nothing would have induced her to take the one her husband had commenced to traverse, owing to a sudden inexplicable fear which caused her to halt suddenly and, calling him back, proceed the other way. I wrote this lady in reply asking for fuller details and if possible a plan or indication of the spot in question. There has been no reply, nor has my addressed envelope been returned. I had hoped to examine the spot when next at the Trianon, but shall not apparently be able to do so, and am again driven to the conclusion that my correspondent not only realised

the retrospective nature of her "experience", but had the moral courage to abstain from compounding an illusion.

Incidentally, at the end of this walk Miss Jourdain actually passed the Belvedere, which she "took for granted was the building we had seen in August", *taking for granted* my own certain conviction that this in fact was the case. Doubts on the subject were to come later in the researches when, with still dimmer memory, the identification of this building becomes one of the central points in the theme. So that whatever we may have to consider with regard to this building later, it may be borne in mind that in 1902 Miss Jourdain herself passed it, and has recorded her belief in its identity with the kiosk of 1901. In view of later categorical denials of this fact, the remark in question is at least interesting.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLOUGH

IN order to facilitate the reader's appreciation of the many points to be considered, I have thought it advisable to adhere broadly to the sequence followed in *An Adventure*, wherein the authors have built up their evidence around various heads representing the major items concerned in the original "apparitions".

The first incident calling for consideration under this heading appears to be Miss Jourdain's remembered glimpse of certain farm implements, amongst which was a plough.

This plough was apparently lying alongside what they later came to know as the "logement", but which looked like farm outbuildings at the time, and is mentioned casually enough when first recalled, "among others a plough".

Once the researches had been seriously undertaken, not unnaturally the memory of each item seen in this location was carefully considered, and the plough singled out for special attention.

In 1905 inquiries were made, and it was ascertained that within the memory of one gardener no plough had been kept at the Trianon—"there was no need of one, as the Government only required the lawns, walks, water, trees and

flowers to be kept up". By 1908 we find Miss Jourdain, on the strength of her eight-year-old memory of a fleeting glance, entering into a discussion on the types of plough used in 1789 as compared with that of modern times, from which she learned that there would be a great difference. Eventually it was ascertained that during the reign of Louis Sixteenth a plough had been kept at the Trianon, but had been disposed of during the Revolution, and that in those dayst here had been ploughland where later the Hameau was built.

An old print showing the Dauphin learning to use a plough is reproduced in one of the earlier editions of *An Adventure*. One cannot but admire the tenacity of purpose which went to achieve this remarkable find, and, in keeping with the whole of the rest of the investigations, its acquisition was a matter of tedious and painstaking work, with many abortive results and disappointing failures. A plough had to be found. It was found.

Nevertheless, the evidence, if it can even be so called, in this instance amounts to little more than a collection of remotely connected data, mainly of a negative description, and based in the first place on a memory image of extreme weakness.

I must assume that Miss Jourdain did see a plough amongst a number of other farm implements, and was able to recall it afterwards. This itself, incidentally, is a remarkable thing,

since at the time of her first visit the implement itself cannot have been of any interest, and could easily have been something different. Few women unconnected with agriculture would even have noted the object amongst others, and of all collections of objects, farming machinery, especially when out of action, surely represents the most formless and indistinguishable stock-in-trade imaginable. Think of the typical agricultural show, where instrument-makers have their stands. Those devoted to ploughs, reapers, grass-cutters and the like look just a jumble of blades and handles to the uninitiated, or certainly do to me.

We have, however, her recorded memory, and the carefully prepared record of the research which amounts to this :

In 1901 a plough was seen. Four years later, in 1905, she was told by a gardener that no plough was kept at the Trianon as none were needed, etcetera. Did this gardener necessarily refer to a period of over four years ?

It was eventually proved that a plough, not in use, was kept (preserved) at the Trianon and sold with the King's properties during the Revolution. If it was never used and merely a relic, why should it be lying in the open air in the logement courtyard, along with other implements presumably still in use ?

The evidence continues with the remark that "it would seem that no plough was used . . . even in old days, for amongst a list of tools

bought for the gardeners from 1780-1789 there is no mention of a plough. . . . In an old map there is ploughed land where later the Hameau was built" (page 68). Thus no plough was used in olden times *because none was purchased between 1780 and 1789*, whilst the ploughed land where now the Hameau stands presumably attended to its own surface treatment !

In 1789 the logement du corps de gardes, which was mistaken in 1901 for farm buildings, would almost certainly be in occupation by the gardes themselves, since the Queen was presumed to be in residence.

Under these circumstances it would be extremely unusual to have farm implements lying in or near the courtyard, and still more so a special plough with historic and personal associations which was being kept as a relic of the reign of Louis Fifteenth. At that date only military equipment would be likely to be in evidence, and all farm implements, if indeed there were any, would surely be stored inside the gardeners' enclosure.

But in 1901, when the whole group of buildings, including the logement, were presumably occupied by civil government employees and gardeners, as it is today, less care would be exercised to keep that particular spot free from untidy farm implements. Thus the picture the authors draw of its general appearance is far more in keeping with its modern than its ancient aspect. When I was there this year, a pile of untidy

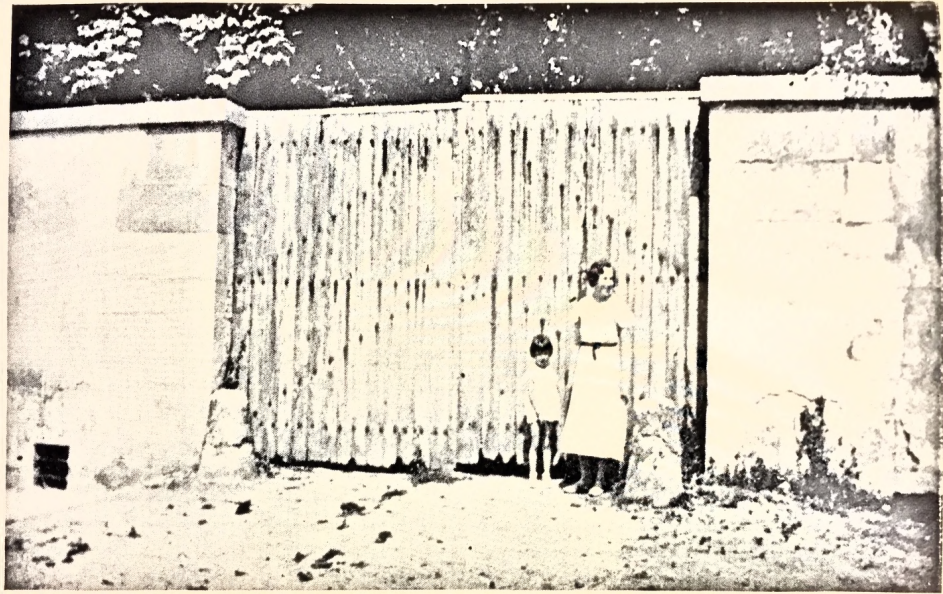
stones and rubble was spread half way across the area in question, and a wheelbarrow lay upturned against them.

Before leaving the examination of this area, it would be well to consider the very obscure question of what I shall describe as the "Avenue and Gate".

This matter is not singled out by the authors, nor, I think, considered a major point, but as it is mentioned several times, and figures in Miss Jourdain's alleged final supernatural experience during a visit in 1908, I thought it advisable to track it to its source.

The incident is, I think, important, as it tends to prove an aptitude for confusion of similar scenes, which characterises the whole story, and which I shall advance in fuller detail in connection with the kiosk. There are two principal gates leading eastward from the path the authors took. One appears to have been closed for centuries, and at some time gave access to the gardeners' enclosure. The other, which as far as I can ascertain has had the actual gates removed for many years (the bastions alone remaining *in situ*), leads direct to the theatre court, and would be used by carriages arriving from the Palace. There is little doubt that the authors, in building memory images in support of matters concerning this locality, have confused the two gates beyond all hope of identification.

Once the idea of changed scenery had gripped their imagination, the different aspects of these



two gates, both leading in the same general direction, lent themselves admirably to the general deception. Both testify to having seen wide-open gates with a well-kept curved drive leading inward between trees, but both assert that it was the closed gates which were open, implying the *vice versa*.

Now, a fifty per cent confusion of characteristics gives us the desired key, as the closed gates are backed by tall trees, whose trunks can be seen over the woodwork, whilst the open gates do lead "to a well-kept curved drive within". Obviously, a very slight misconception would bring these differences to bear on the fixed idea of a miraculous change in scenery at this point.

In the light of this explanation, it now seems quite clear to me that the gates which melted before Miss Jourdain's eyes in 1908 were in fact the open ones leading to the theatre court. Though why, after all her tireless efforts to verify the facts which had gone before, she did not at once run through them and make sure of her ground, simply passes comprehension. Once again, at the eleventh hour, she believed herself to be witnessing the original phenomena in full force, yet, to use her own words, she "instantly decided to keep to my plan of going straight out by the lane, and once outside the lane, things became natural again".

There is a footnote under this description (page 108) referring to the gate pillars, which Miss Jourdain tells us "were standing steady"

during the miraculous "melting away" of the gates between them. It records that the pillars were old and probably had not been renewed since their original erection. She had just passed the *closed* gates, and turned her eyes ahead again. Turning round suddenly, having advanced opposite the open ones, in the mood which possessed her, they appeared to be the first ones *with the gates removed* and, having more prominent side pillars than the first, lent themselves more readily to the deception and left the impression recorded.

I re-acted this scene myself, simulating as far as possible her mood and attitude, and the whole incident suddenly became clear to me. The rest was sheer fright.

Incidentally, the scientific-minded might note that in just such manner, with almost unlimited acceleration, the modern cine-camera would be used to provide a conscious illusion of disappearing gates, passing first a closed gate before the eyes, and following it with an interval by a similar open one.

The interval was provided by the lady turning her head away momentarily—the focus—by her change of position in the meantime and the element of deception, present in all moving-pictures, by her admittedly strange mood.

CHAPTER VII

THE GUARDS

THE second event of importance recorded in the original statements made by the authors was their meeting with the two gardeners, of whom they asked directions. These two persons are later referred to as guards, though they were taken for gardeners in the first instance.

Referring to the 1901 statements, we have respectively the following wording in relation to this incident :

Miss Moberly : "There were three paths in front of us, and as we saw two men a little ahead on the centre one, we followed it and asked them the way. Afterwards we spoke of them as gardeners, because we remembered a wheelbarrow of some kind close by and the look of a pointed spade."

Miss Jourdain : "There were two men there in official dress (greenish in colour), with something in their hands, it might have been a staff. A wheelbarrow and some other gardening tools were near them."

Now, the authors have fixed the point of this meeting some twenty or thirty feet farther back in the course of the walk than I am prepared to

concede. There is evidence that it took place at a point opposite the front of the present gardener's cottage, and not alongside the wall opposite the reservoir, as they believe. As the reader will have gathered, I freely admit the encounter, and that the persons in question were actually gardeners working, or in attendance on work, in the immediate vicinity. If this assumption is correct it supports a later contention that the woman and child seen by Miss Jourdain in a doorway were in fact standing in the doorway of the cottage itself, and not in that of a non-existent cottage which had to be found in the ancient maps and located alongside what is now a blank wall.

"It was not until we reached the crest of the rising ground *where there was a garden* that I began to feel that we had lost our way. . . . There were two men there."

Now, I have carefully examined the ground at this point on several occasions, and find it quite impossible to see how the men could have been encountered on the spot indicated later by the authors.

Firstly, Miss Jourdain speaks of the crest of the rising ground, whereas the traditional spot would necessarily be well behind the crest, and on a steepish hillside ; and secondly, the garden does not come into view until the crest is reached.

Also we have Miss Moberley's statement, "There were paths in front of us", which fixes the spot at a point over the actual crest of the hill

from which alone it is possible to see any paths at all.

Curiously enough, in August 1937 I myself found two gardeners working at this spot—a very natural sort of local centre for workmen in the vicinity, as it is close to the cottage and accessible to all parts of the English garden, near the tool supplies, and the entrances to the gardeners' enclosure.

Both statements record having asked the way, whilst Miss Jourdain mentions having repeated the question and received the same reply, "Straight on", in a manner which she describes as "casual and mechanical", or scarcely in accordance with what one would expect from men suddenly confronted by two women from another and distant world !

Now, the directions these men gave them are very important in the light of subsequent events, and should be particularly noticed. From this spot the direction "straight on" is singularly ambiguous, and there is no question that the gardeners realised this a few moments later, when they saw the ladies aimlessly wandering down a path which would have led them direct to the *Hameau*, had they not *sent a young man running after them* to put them right !

I am not impressed with the detailed description of these two men which comes to light only during the research portion of Miss Moberly's book. The original statements describe them as gardeners, and meeting them evoked no special

curiosity at the time. This was to come afterwards, like most of the observations bearing on the mystical elements involved.

In spite of the accurate description of the green uniforms worn by these men which both the authors subscribe to later, it seems very curious that at the time it did not seem in any way odd that gardeners should be so equipped. They were accepted as *gardeners*, even up to the belated statements of November 1901, though in this record Miss Jourdain does use the expression "greenish in colour".

Later they become "*guards, dignified officials*", etc., whilst staves instead of spades are added during the research references.

The way in which details are enumerated, both in this and other instances, long after the original memoranda, is a characteristic of the whole story, and must not be ignored.

Painstaking research, not unnaturally, elicited that two guards would have been on duty, or about the place, on October 5th, 1789. Even their names were noted, the brothers Bersy, and that they would have been dressed in green uniforms was also confirmed from contemporary records (p. 71). But surely the Trianon must have been duly guarded during the Queen's residence, and there could not have been less than two available for that part of the garden, whilst even the authors admit that there were three brothers doing that duty at the time. It was not, therefore, difficult to fill the roles once

the records became available—merely a matter of selection ! Had not the Bersy brothers been available, one feels that suitable men could have been “brought” from any section of the ancient staff !

Pages 69 to 71 of *An Adventure* testify to the tireless efforts put forth to verify the uniforms and probable characteristics of the “guards” whose first appearance, bear in mind, gave only the ordinary impression of gardeners, as, indeed, gardeners they must have been.

It might also be noticed that the visit was made in working hours. Four p.m. and the month was August, when activity in the gardens would be expected to be at its height. I was there in August myself, and gardeners were in evidence in several different quarters, including the exact spot in question. A Frenchman, M. Sage, who walked over this spot in 1912 after reading the first edition of *An Adventure*, reports also that almost exactly opposite the gardener’s cottage he found four gardeners at work !

Everything, therefore, points to the fact that not only was this the most likely spot on which the presence of gardeners might be expected, but that the frequency of these men assembled for various reasons in it adds strong testimony to the contention that this was the spot and not the traditional one on which the encounter took place.

That the men were gardeners seems certain, even if “decked out subsequently by tricks of

memory, after the idea of haunting had occurred to them" (the authors).

The Cottage, Woman, and Girl

Whilst speaking to the two men, Miss Jourdain observed on her right hand a solidly built cottage with stone steps, on which a woman in old-fashioned dress was standing, handing something to a girl of about thirteen or fourteen, who wore a white cap and skirts nearly reaching to her ankles (p. 71).

It should be noted that the statement specifically records that the couple were noticed *whilst speaking to the two men*, a memory having essentially the note of definiteness and strengthened by an association of ideas. If, therefore, our contention as to locality holds good, the woman and girl were standing at the doorway of the present gardener's cottage, which could easily, in retrospect, appear as small and detached. It is actually detached, but owing to its being built with a frontage continuing in line with a high wall, *subsequent* examination of it might indicate otherwise.

In their subsequent researches, assuming this couple to have been seen in a non-existent cottage on the now discredited site alongside the blank wall farther down the sloping ground, opposite the reservoir, the authors came to some remarkable conclusions.

As usual, with infinite pains, they discovered

that in 1789 there lived in one of the gardener's cottages a young girl Marion. This Marion was located in a story by Julie Lavergne (read in 1906), and would, according to calculations, have been fourteen years old at the time (1789).

Now, I shall, of course, hold that the persons seen were, in fact, a woman and girl much as described, who happened to be outside the door of the present cottage on that August afternoon. Why this could not have been confirmed, even as late as six months after, is difficult to understand, but instead of attempting to do so, the usual historical explanations were at once entered into to the exclusion of practical considerations.

Thus, whilst the contemporary evidence was rapidly becoming less and less reliable through the natural changes which take place in personnel, particularly in the case of young persons, the search for a character suited to 1789 went on unabated.

Not unnaturally, with the mass of documents available, a young girl was found and named Marion, the semi-authentic character of Julie Lavergne's romantic story of the Trianon. Once having placed her, the authors seemed satisfied, and made no further recorded inquiries, though we now know that even the position of the house was entirely wrong.

It was fortunate for their case, though doubly misleading, that on Mique's map a building was marked as having existed at or near the spot which they took for the one on which they met

the gardeners, also some vague marks on the present wall where it might have been attached.

From a close examination of this rather vague map I am convinced that the building was *not* a cottage, and the level of the ground at that point would seem further to bear me out in this. It would have been an odd locality to have built one in any case, and out of keeping with the rest of the gardeners' ménage as it is today. This in addition to the fact that the locality itself is so manifestly in error.

It might be as well here to note that had a fraction of the time spent studying the National Archives and other obscure documents been devoted to a systematic census of the *contemporary* personnel, *An Adventure* might well have never been written at all. It would almost seem at times that anyone approaching the authors with a claim to recognition by them during the first few years would have been told not to waste their time: "You do not interest us—you did not live in 1789"; "We cannot have met you, my friend—you are a modern man, and not he for whom we seek" !

CHAPTER VIII

THE KIOSK

"ON our entrance into the English garden in 1901", Miss Moberly states (p. 72), "we found our path crossed by another, beyond which, in front of us but rather to the left hand, stood a small circular building having pillars and a low surrounding wall. It was on rough, uneven ground, and was overshadowed by trees."

Following the exact route, and standing on the spot referred to here, I recently took the greatest care to recapture the motif of this description. And allowing for faults in memory amounting, admittedly, to those of over a week's standing, and probably much longer, I confirmed my first opinion as to the cause of the vital mistake in this instance.

As I stood on the spot it was possible to give a description so like the original as to make no material difference when the question of retrospective memory was duly allowed for.

At this point the path is "crossed by another", and, as recorded, "rather to the left hand" stands a small circular building with a low surrounding terrace, and walls under each of several windows, which occupy the flat hexagonal sections into which it is divided. The kiosk (Belvedere) has

not actually walls surrounding it, but the general impression would give this idea to anyone viewing it momentarily and trying to remember it at a later date. It is very much "overshadowed by trees", and could be said to stand on rough, uneven ground. It is exactly the spot on which visitors would be tempted to stop for rest, and in all probability sit down for a moment on the steps, from which a view of the lake can be obtained.

So overshadowed is the Belvedere that, except from a distance, it is very difficult to photograph, and unless the authors walked some distance away in a southerly direction it is possible only to obtain a view of less than about a quarter of the building at once.

Whilst I was there several groups of visitors used it as a halting-place. A group of schoolgirls stopped to discuss further progress, and several took photos, and a young couple actually sat down on the steps.

The photograph I did take was obtained with some difficulty owing to the restricted light, and shows as much of the building as was possible without going to a great distance and into a locality not in any way concerned in the story.

I thought it as well to include a figure in this view, and was obliged by a man who was standing on the terrace at the time. I think I have got him in the wrong place, and his attitude is hardly that of a courtier, but he serves the purpose, I think, and I am deeply obliged to him.

Incidentally, I hope he will never know that he served as a model for Miss Moberly's "repulsive-looking man", as he seemed quite pleased to sit for me, and was watched by his two admiring offspring, who hid discreetly in the bushes at my request !

If I had passed casually over this route and been asked to describe the building, I should certainly have remembered it as a small garden kiosk or ornamental outbuilding, probably with low walls, and certainly as much overshadowed by trees. I should, in recalling it, almost certainly have said it was round, though it is actually hexagonal, and would, in all probability, have said it had pillars from the impression caused by the small pillars supporting the sections of wall under each window.

This last impression would in all probability have been very much strengthened by a composite memory, including the Temple de l'Amour, which is visible to all visitors to the English garden, and which has pillars exactly as described by the authors. In short, a week later, if a description had to be given by a casual observer, the one given by the authors would almost *exactly coincide with what one would expect to obtain*. And so little doubt on the subject had entered the heads of the couple as late as January 1901 that Miss Jourdain passed it again on that date, presuming without misgivings that it was, indeed, the same building.

Yet later they were both to deny absolutely

that the Belvedere was "their kiosk", and the longest search of the whole investigation was devoted to proving their belated contention.

It is interesting here to note that never at any time did the authors claim to have seen more than *one* kiosk, nor more than *one* rustic bridge. There is one kiosk, and they saw one. There is one rustic bridge; they walked over one. Having, however, convinced themselves that the scenery seen in 1901 was not that of 1789, it was necessary to effect the identification relating to the change in dates. And it is my contention that even with all the work expended, and all the painstaking researches, they have not effectively proved this garden to have been different in any essentials from what it is today.

The Belvedere was built in 1781, being actually completed in May of that year,* and stood, therefore, exactly as it does at present, with much the same arboreal setting. It has never been altered or added to in any way, yet to meet their case the authors had to find another and smaller kiosk in a different situation.

The evidence which they advance to cover this alleged difficulty represents the most tireless and exhaustive efforts apparent in the whole history of their researches.

They even studied the gardeners' wages book for the period, from which they extracted records of proposed garden buildings, or "ruines", some of which may, or may not, have materialised.

**Le Petit Trianon*, Léon Rey.

There is reason to think that in some cases a start was made, with subsequent alterations, and in others the projects never reached beyond the plan stage. They had this in their favour : at the time in question vast sums were being spent, and wasted, on getting the gardens exactly to the Queen's liking, and much activity is recorded in schemes which were discussed, commented upon by the King, and eventually discarded.

In his excellent illustrated book on the Trianon recently published, M. Léon Rey gives what he describes as a "*tableau chronologique*", setting out in detail, even to the exact days concerned, the history of every major undertaking and alteration effected in the Trianon gardens from 1774 to 1789. There is no mention of any other kiosk, though the history of the building of the Belvedere is given in full. For example : "1778. March. Commencement de la construction du belvedere"; and again : "May 31st, 1781. Le belvedere est achevé."

Everything of importance is referred to in this schedule, even to the construction and completion of minor parts of the various outbuildings and the exact dates on which they were first used. Would he have omitted the inclusion of an elaborate garden-kiosk in a list which includes every other building and even the planting of trees and shrubs ?

The authors rely on the vaguest evidence in support of there having been another and different kind of kiosk in the position in which they

thought they first saw it. "In 1909 two old maps were procured from Paris; in one, dated 1849 (?) there is something which may indicate a small round building placed on the rocher behind the Belvedere. The other map was reproduced from an old one in 1705. . . . In this map below the name 'pavillon de musique' (the Belvedere) is the name 'le kiosque'. It does not seem likely that a second name for the Belvedere should be given, and it may, therefore, refer to something else which does not appear on this map."

To me it seems most likely that the two names were used, the second description "kiosque" in explanation to the technical personnel concerned, that the building named Belvedere was, in fact, a kind of kiosk.

Miss Moberly draws the far-fetched conclusion from this dual marking that "therefore the mere chance name which from the first moment we gave to our building was justified by there having been something called by that name exactly in that part of the garden". There was. And the Belvedere was undoubtedly the building in question.

Again, purely circumstantially, it would seem most unlikely, having regard to the care with which the gardens are laid out, and the attention paid to suitable balance and studied irregularity, that another kiosk would stand at any time so near the Belvedere. Such an arrangement would tend to ruin the aspect aimed at, and the



The Chapel Door (closed since about 1850), from which the "Chapel Man" was alleged to have appeared in 1901, "banging the door behind him".

second building at such a point would be quite superfluous, if not actually unsuitable, with so many open and more convenient spots available.

As I have said, the wasteful and prodigal expenditure lavished on the Trianon gardens during the reign of Marie-Antoinette seems to have resulted at this period in a large number of abandoned plans and expensive alterations. The present *rocher* alongside the rustic bridge was altered and rebuilt many times before it finally suited its designers. This naturally gave the authors much additional scope for what they mistook for relevant matter, once having obtained access to the private wages book and gardeners' daily records.

It was all part of the reckless spending which the Queen eventually deplored.

The Queen herself has left behind her a reference to the immense sums which were spent on the Trianon during the time of her residence.

"Il est possible que le Petit Trianon ait coûté des sommes immenses, peut-être plus que je n'aurais désiré ; on avait été entraîné dans les dépenses peu à peu ; du reste, je désire, plus que personne, que l'on soit instruit de ce qui s'y est passé."—*Procès de la Reine*.

That much of these sums went in abortive schemes is obvious from the records in the gardeners' wages books and technical records left by Mique and others, in themselves most interesting historically, if wrongly applied.

This section of the researches incidentally would be of incalculable value to an author dealing with certain aspects of the Queen's life. And it is doubtful whether any writer, even in an effort to stress this very prominent aspect of her final unpopularity, has found himself in possession of detail even half so precise or well authenticated.

The authors of *An Adventure* were rarely satisfied with recorded data, but went always to the earliest and most original documents for their facts. Where less well-supported data is quoted, or circumstantial evidence relied upon, it is always clearly indicated as such. Their transparent honesty can never be questioned.

CHAPTER IX

THE RUNNING MAN

IN the 1901 statement Miss Moberly describes this incident as follows :

"It was a great relief at this moment to hear someone running up to us in breathless haste. Connecting the sound with the gardeners [NOTICE!—J.R.S.W.], I turned and ascertained that there was no one on the paths, either to the side or behind ; but at almost the same moment I suddenly perceived another man quite close to us, behind and rather to the left hand, who had, apparently, just come either over or through the rock (or whatever it was) that shut out the view at the junction of the paths. The suddenness of his appearance was something of a shock.

"The second man was distinctly a gentleman ; . . . his face was glowing red as through exertion. . . . He looked greatly excited as he called to us : 'Mesdames ! Mesdames ! Il ne faut pas passes par la.' He then waved his arm, and said, with great animation : 'Par ici . . . cherchez la maison.' I looked at him again, and to this he responded with a little backward movement and a most peculiar smile."

Now, with the exception of a few remarks describing his dress, this statement may be taken as exactly what occurred, or appeared to occur. And before going any further, does it not pretty fairly present a picture of the sudden appearance of a third gardener, or someone connected with the other two gardeners, who had been sent on to put the ladies on the right track after seeing that they were completely lost as a result of the rather lazy and ambiguous directions contained in their "straight on" instructions of a few minutes earlier? The point at which they encountered this second man is fixed in my opinion almost to an inch, by the reference to the kiosk alongside which they were standing, and from which three very dark and winding paths diverge. The "very peculiar smile" would be quite natural to someone who had run forward and found two people hopelessly lost in a locality which he knew well.

The rock ("or whatever it was"), which in later mention becomes "an isolated rock" (undoubtedly a high mound of earth which still stands at this point, overgrown with shrubs), does very effectively "shut out the view at the junction of the paths".

Further, anyone approaching it from where the first two gardeners were standing would have to do so by coming *right round it*, from one side or the other, and consequently, if running, would appear at the spot almost instantaneously.

Whilst I was standing on this spot recently,

weighing up the position from every possible angle, I heard running footsteps myself, but, like the authors also, could see no one. Suddenly, with a skid of slipping feet, a small schoolgirl appeared from behind the mound, nearly knocking me down with a scooter she was pushing !

I was grateful for the intrusion, for a more perfect and unpremeditated example of what must have occurred could scarcely be imagined. And although I had already formed my own picture of the occurrence, it was quite surprising how suddenly the child appeared, "as if from nowhere".

Now, in my opinion, as stated elsewhere, this incident constituted the beginning of the whole strange illusion.

It evoked no special comment at the time, but viewed in retrospect lent itself to speculations which were destined to grow into something so mysterious as to give rise to the very mystery itself. Obviously, once the idea of a sudden and miraculous appearance had occurred to the authors, and in the absence of the local setting (which was not revisited until four years later), the true explanations of the sudden appearance could never be appreciated. The mysterious elements would be exaggerated and made, later, to fit the circumstances of what they became to believe to be the case until, later on, we have Miss Moberly describing the miraculous way in which the man's feet first touched the ground, "with a flicker of adjustment", though no hint of

any such impression finds its way into the original statements.

To me the illusion which owes its birth to this incident is overwhelmingly impressive, so certain am I that it formed the central and primary motif for the whole story. If in the present century two highly intelligent women could so shape the event as to build upon it a structure sound enough to deceive several at least of the greatest intellects of our time, how much of history can still command our trust? But this is digressing.

It must also be remembered that by the time the authors were able to return to the spot, when the true nature of the locality could have been examined and the probable cause of the sudden appearance properly estimated, they had long since come to believe that they were in some quite different place at the time. Though even in spite of this one feels that a careful survey of the ground—inch by inch, so to speak—would have served to recall it. The new picture of the whole area had, however, by 1904 become to them a fixed “memory”, and it is possible that the dismissal of an imagined scene, particularly after years of concentration on it, would be more difficult by then than a logical mental correction of the original impression.

Never once, as far as we know, did the authors attempt to overthrow their new conviction, even as an assumption, in order to test out the theory on rational grounds, nor indeed to afford the

to reach to the subject which precludes one from
using them of sheer obstinacy in this direction.
The conclusions at which they eventually
arrived in connection with the "running man"
involve a story of 1789, with some claim to
authenticity, the dramatic beauty of which is
itself so impressive as to obscure the issue to the

The story as related can be made to suit the case fairly well if the obvious objections are ignored. We are told that on receiving the message the Queen suggested walking back to the Palace through the woods, and was discouraged by the messenger, who indicated that she should return to the house (Trianon) to await her carriage. In this incident the authors seem to see some inexplicable parallel with the man's urgent injunction to "cherchez la maison", which remark, incidentally, could never have applied in the historic case, being both disrespectful and entirely irrelevant.

On the other hand, the contemporary figure sent forward by the two gardeners would have used exactly this expression, knowing that by turning to the right the house itself would immediately come into view. And having regard to the nature of the paths and obstructions at this point, it would be almost the only possible way of giving clear directions in a few words.

The issue is further complicated by the fact that, as far as can be ascertained, using negative evidence of unquestionable value the Queen's grotto was never situated anywhere in the locality concerned, but some considerable distance away, behind the Belvedere.

Much attention is later given to the accent used by the running man in giving his directions in French.

It is difficult to imagine anyone remembering an accent in a foreign language a week later,

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but even had they done so the fact that it appeared to have an Austrian inflection seems to prove little, and rather exemplifies the lengths to which the authors went on matters of detail in supporting their contentions.

Of the description of the man's clothes, there is little we can say at this distance, but remembering the discrepancy in the original documents with regard to Miss Jourdain's mention of his buckled shoes, it would seem likely that our observations in respect of the two gardeners would equally apply : "decked out by tricks of memory to represent historical characters".

Miss Jourdain remarks that "the man ran off with a curious smile on his face . . . the running ceased as abruptly as it had begun, not far from where we stood". Once having rounded the mound of earth, this is exactly the impression his rapid departure would convey.

Now, the incident of the "running man" cannot well be fully investigated without further reference to the grotto, or "grotte", in or near which the Queen was said to have been sitting at the time of her hurried summons.

All the various detailed references to the appearance of the grotto at the time, with their mention of the stream, the fallen leaves, etc. (Madame Lavergne), can have no connection with the point at which I claim the running man was encountered. And the authors would, of course (for a different reason), make no attempt to associate the details in question with the

junction of the paths close by the Belvedere. They must therefore be considered only as referring to the ancient grotto lying to the east of the Escargot hill, and on the opposite side to the Belvedere from the point we are dealing with.

I cannot find one scrap of real evidence that there ever existed an artificial grotto at any other than the traditional position against the Escargot hill. There may have been projects, but nothing which materialised sufficiently to be worthy of record in accredited histories of the place.

In Léon Rey's book there is a sketch of the Queen's grotto, a dark passage under artificial rocks, in many ways strongly suggesting the present *rocher*, but larger and probably more elaborately constructed. We know this was finally levelled by Louis Philippe, probably on account of the difficulty in keeping it working properly with its elaborate irrigation system and artificial waterfalls. Everyone in authority at once points out the site on which it stood, and no question is ever encountered as to doubts in the matter. The Queen's grotto was a well-known piece of extravagance at the time, and is mentioned in revolutionary literature.

In his *tableau chronologique* M. Léon Rey gives the following data : On July 1st, 1780, the construction of the grotto was commenced, and it was probably finished towards the end of August. The Belvedere was at that time also under construction near by, but, owing to the elaborate sculpture and interior decorations,

took considerably longer, not being finished until May 31st, 1781. The rocher had been started in August 1779 and finished after many alterations in 1782, so that these three major operations were in progress at the same time. It seems, therefore, inconceivable that with such detail as this available for these items, further grottos in a different position should have somehow completely escaped mention. Neither is there any mention of anything else of the kind in the whole chronological list from 1774 to 1789, in spite of the very small items which figure therein.

There seems no question to doubt that in studying the gardeners' wages book the authors have seized upon a lot of totally irrelevant matter to support their beliefs, most of it never intended for further study by anyone, and grossly misleading.

Imagine, in this connection, examining the whole contents of a drawing-office, unearthed after many years from the débris of a factory explosion. If, for instance, at the time of the disaster a new type of air-liner was being projected, and all the original draft plans, rough sketches, suggestions for fittings, etc., etc., were found and examined, I venture to suggest that the most amazing monstrosity could be thereby reconstructed. For in such cases far more drawings are produced than ever reach the workshops themselves. The most odd ideas are considered, sketched out and abandoned, though

probably not actually destroyed until all is completed.

There is evidence also that in several cases the authors have noted and even mentioned projects which are now known to have been abandoned, in order to strengthen this part of their story. Taken separately, they are not impressive, but lumped together, so to speak, they make a fairly formidable contribution.

Miss Jourdain's stubborn confidence in this matter is worthy of note. Miss Olivier, in her preface, uses this to the authors' strong advantage, though, of course, I cannot see it so. "In the wrong place", "it is amusing to read this confident comment on the old maps". It is . . . but rather pathetic !

"The map we found this morning at the archives at Versailles, and the one of Contant de la Motte, *give the grotto in the wrong place*", states Miss Jourdain in one of her letters. Yet when the evidence suited her I venture to suggest that these very same maps and documents were called to very good account. The old map must have been wrong, and, therefore, of no further use . . . "but the papers I found in Paris *seem* to point the other way"—her way ?

In 1904 Miss Moberly asked to be shown the traditional grotto, and was taken to one on the farther side of the Belvedere "near the hill called l'Escargot", which was formed in 1781. "We felt sure that this could not have been either of the two grottos mentioned in the archives." And

here I think she was right, but to little purpose, as the grottos mentioned in the archives never materialised.

It is interesting to notice that all the extracts from the archives relating to grottos and similar works—several referred to as “projets”—are dated some time before the authentic record of the building of the actual Queen’s grotto, as though, after considering the various schemes, they were eventually abandoned in favour of the one on the Escargot site.

That the Queen’s grotto was a most elaborate structure is at once apparent from the remarks of all who mention it. It was built up of rocks specially imported for the purpose, and water was laid on at various points to supply artificial cascades and miniature streams. Many of the old control taps can still be seen almost buried in the ground between this site and the reservoir.

Miss Moberly’s suggestion that these same rocks were used later to build the rocher cannot be true, as we know this to have been completed some years before 1789. It is a separate structure, designed and carried out to a definite scheme, as we shall see later.

“In 1780, August, masses of rock were procured, and the petite rivière began, and also a hill was thrown up pour couvrir la grotte” (p. 81). Exactly! We have this confirmed already in Léon Rey’s schedule. “The Queen’s grotto at l’Escargot.”

CHAPTER X

THE MAN BY THE KIOSK

ON their first visit the authors describe having seen a dark-complexioned man, marked by smallpox, sitting close to the kiosk, wearing a large dark cloak and slouch hat.

"There might be nothing surprising in what we saw if the kiosk could be found", remarks Miss Moberly (p. 75), and since we are now in a position to state that the kiosk certainly has been found, and was, in fact, the Belvedere, there will not be very much more that we can say on this incident.

As pointed out elsewhere, it became necessary to the case that a dark-complexioned man with pock-marked features should be located amongst the possible inhabitants of the Trianon in 1789, and the comte de Vaudreuil was eventually allocated to fill the role. The author rather weakens her case, even in this instance, by remarking that at one time this man was one of the Queen's innermost circle, but had in 1784 acted an enemy's part in persuading her to act in a politically dangerous play. It was not difficult to find reference to people whose faces were disfigured by smallpox in 1789, as this disease had been raging for years in and around

Paris, many of the Court personnel being known to have contracted it.

There are always a large number of very dark-complexioned people to be seen in Paris, and the man who obliged me by posing for his photo on the Belvedere steps was an example of the type. That a similar visitor occupied this position on August 10th, 1901, now seems certain, and in view of the little importance even the authors attach to the incident, there seems little further that one can say in the matter.

Again, the question of the man's strange clothes, though in this instance described with much less detail, seems only to call for the usual comment which need not be repeated.

Bridge Over Little Cascade

It has been impossible in making a full analysis of the evidence to avoid a certain amount of repetition, owing to the way in which the authors have thought fit to consolidate their case. In doing so they have been compelled to rely on many interdependent facts which precludes their being divided sharply for consideration as separate items.

This applies particularly to the question of the rustic bridge, or the "bridge over the little cascade", which they held to have been an ancient structure occupying some part of the Queen's grotto in a situation which we can now

no longer allow—namely, between the large lake and the theatre, or just to the western side of the present rocher.

At a risk of repetition, therefore, I propose to examine this part of the evidence somewhat closely.

In Chapter III we considered a number of aspects of this particular section of the walk and came to the conclusion that, even after a critical examination of the original evidence, it was obvious that the bridge in question was the present rocher bridge. The descriptions, it will be remembered, allowing for memory faults, tally very fairly with what one would have expected them to relate, with the exception of one point, “the tiny thread-like cascade”, which Miss Moberly describes as having been passed so near that she could have touched it with her right hand.

Now, for a long time this gave me much trouble, as I felt it unlikely that such an accurate picture could have been retained without some cause. It *might* have been that the impression was built up of composite data in retrospect—the cascade itself an exaggeration of the damp, dripping aspect of the rock linked with the memory of other waterfalls in the grounds; but I was not too satisfied as to this, and resolved to probe deeper.

I made a special visit to the Trianon with a view to further study of this and other problems; and with success. I am now convinced that the

rock has yielded its secret, though not without much trouble and some risk.

I arrived at the Trianon in the early afternoon and went straight to the rocher in the hope of obtaining photographs before the light became too weak. Several of these I was able to take, and two are successful, though photography is very difficult anywhere in the vicinity, owing to the overshadowing trees.

Having done so, I commenced a minute study of the bridge and rock itself, determined to find, if possible, how the idea of "a little cascade" came to materialise in 1901. There is a thin trickle of water over stones below the bridge, referred to by Miss Jourdain (I suggest rather unwillingly) in the published portion of her statement (Chapter III, *Pathetic Illusion*), and this, I felt, might easily have supplied the element in the retrospective picture under consideration. But I was still dissatisfied.

I suddenly noticed that at the base of the rock, so placed as to be visible to people on the bridge, were two or three irregular stone pockets, or pools, obviously either intended for the growth of ferns and rock-plants or to form intermediate rock pools to catch a water-supply the source of which was not apparent. As the rock stands up straight on fairly high ground, no natural stream could ever flow over it, and with the exception of intermittent dripping after rain I could not see how ever anything in the nature of a cascade could have issued from any part of it. Yet

certain narrow crevices bore the appearance of having had water running over them, and there was one of these, very natural in appearance, over each of the little basins.

Failing to find any possible water-supply from the bridge or ground-level, I decided to climb the rock, which was precipitous and slippery after a wet week-end.

At some risk (incidentally, the problem of getting up was nothing to that of getting down again) I scaled the rock from the back, and sat for a moment to regain my breath. At first, nothing. . . . I was about to descend when I noticed an old pipe, cut off short, at the very highest point, and quite invisible from any other viewpoint than the one I then occupied. It had its end turned down over some ivy, below which I found a cunningly concealed lead tank half full of water ! Further, scratching amongst the ivy revealed three other hidden tanks and the remains of more piping. So the rocher had been fitted at one time with a concealed water-supply !

Now, this was a considerable find, though not in any way conclusive, as there was no means of finding exactly how and where the water was allowed to run when the system was in working order, and as the pipes leading to the tanks had been cut off short it was impossible to experiment in any way.

Whilst on top of the rock I scooped up with both hands as much water as I could, and allowed

it to splash over the sides of the tank. For several seconds the whole rock dripped water, which found its way to almost every side through cracks and crevices, and I came to the conclusion that in some such way the original system had been allowed to operate. Further close examination revealed small holes and the remains of pipes leading to various parts of the rock, all carefully hidden and in most cases covered with cement.

It is clear, therefore, that the whole system had been designed so that by turning on a water-supply the artificial rock should be provided with little cascades (thread-like cascades) arranged to fall with studied naturalness into the little moss-lined basins and away under the bridge by concealed conduits now completely blocked up and unrecognisable. One such basin and crevice was situated in such a position that it could have been touched by the right hand of anyone on the bridge.

I found it impossible to ascertain whether or not any part of this system had been working in 1901. The official I questioned did not even know of its existence ! But one thing can be noted : that as the present condition of the water-supply is largely due to natural decay, it would be somewhere nearer working order in 1901 than it is today. And even if not actually working, the tanks might well have been overflowing from the rain which Miss Moberly tells us had fallen the previous day, as it did when I stirred it up by hand.

Now, with this information and our previous deductions the difficulty of the cascade seems to have been duly resolved, allowing always for faults in memory.

Whilst on my last visit I noticed also that by making a right turn after passing over the bridge—and I am inclined to think the authors did this—one has to pass through a small cavern, which itself could only be described as a grotto. In doing so one passes yet another of the moss-lined basins at the foot of a (now) dry crevice.

The very comprehensive extracts from the archives and elsewhere which the authors have quoted describing the Queen's grotto through which they thought they had passed bear much natural resemblance to my descriptions of the rocher, with its one tiny grotto, through which they did actually walk. This is not surprising, as, apart from the site, there were many similarities. Both had cunningly concealed water-supplies and were constructions of rock and stones. And though the one is now completely destroyed, one feels that much can be learned of it by a study of the other. To confuse the actual rocher with a description of the Queen's grotto is, I think very natural, in view of the circumstances, and one would want the most positive proofs available before accepting the implications concerned in the certainty of their separate identity.

Nothing in the authors' observations would justify us in coming to such a conclusion.

CHAPTER XI

THE ISOLATED ROCK

It will be remembered that the authors seemed to think that when approached by the "running man" alongside the kiosk they were standing by what was later described as an isolated rock.

We have already identified this as a high mound of earth covered with trees and shrubs, and noted that it would effectively conceal the approach of anyone coming from the direction of the gardener's cottage, until they had actually arrived at the spot.

In support of this, having in fact been an isolated rock, Miss Moberly goes to considerable trouble. Amongst other observations, she implies the possibility of this rock having been broken up or removed in sections, some of which she tries to identify with certain isolated rocks now lying in the small pool under the rocher.

With commendable imagination, she also notes that a pine tree appears to be growing on one of these, and remarks that this species of tree was known to have been planted high up over the Queen's grotto to give the appearance of a Swiss mountain (page 87). The suggestion here is, of course, that the present pine tree now growing

on the rock in the rocher pool was a seedling which adhered to it before its removal.

She also notes, and I have confirmed, that at the side of the piece of rock in question is what looks like an artificial projection, and hints that this might have been the support of a bridge similar to the one she thought she had crossed in 1901.

I can see little value in these observations. We know that the rocher was subjected to frequent alterations before it was finally completed, and the tool-marked rock in question is far more likely to have been a portion of some earlier detail concerned in the construction of the present design than that it should have been imported from elsewhere. It stands now in a very natural position, quite in keeping with the rest of the structure, and is cemented in places, to support it in the position calculated to give it the best appearance.

Incidentally, another observation made by Miss Moberly is disposed of at once by my discovery of the old irrigation system on the top of the rocher.

She remarks (page 88) that "a rough rock staircase *which has no meaning* is attached to this rock behind", and at once notes that a staircase was mentioned as having been within the grotto (Queen's grotto) leading up to its entrance on the high ground on the "montagnes". The implication here being, of course, further evidence that the "vanished" grotto had been utilised for supplies in building the rocher.

We now know, of course, that this "rough rock staircase"—which is, incidentally, hardly recognisable as such—was arranged in order that some agile attendant could at times reach the tanks in order to clean and attend to them. It was so designed as to look as little like a staircase as possible, and was extremely difficult to climb, but would serve as some sort of access on the rare occasions when it was necessary. Naturally, knowing nothing of the hidden tanks, Miss Moberly would consider this vague stairway to "have no meaning".

"There is now no isolated rock standing up as we saw it behind the running man—only mounds covered with shrubs and trees. . . . In 1788 rocks were placed in various parts, and one is specially mentioned, *pièce dominante au bord du lac de l'ancien côté des rochers . . . au long du chemin de l'emplacement de la Ruine sur la conduite en bois à la deuxième source du Ravin*. This would have been the path we were on in 1901" (page 88).

But since this would equally apply to conditions on the eastern side of the Belvedere, it can have little bearing on the case in question.

In any case, it would be difficult to imagine a reliable distinction having been drawn between "an isolated rock" and a high mound of earth, long after the original visit, when the only factor likely to have impressed the observers would be its capacity for obscuring the view at

the junction of the paths. Besides, it only becomes "an isolated rock" after considerable meditation, being described at first as "a rock, or whatever it was".

The Pelouse

"Beyond the little bridge our pathway led under trees ; it skirted a narrow meadow of long grass, bounded on the further side by trees, and very much overshadowed by trees growing in it. This gave the whole place a sombre look suggestive of dampness, and shut out the view of the house until we were close to it."

This description of the next stage of the walk, which appears in Miss Moberly's original statement, holds good in all essential respects today, provided that she did in fact turn right at the rocher after passing through the tiny grotto which forms part of it, and strengthens my conviction that she did so. In any case, it would fairly describe the slightly more eastward route she would otherwise have taken, which after a few yards brings one in front of the house at the same point.

I followed the route most carefully, with the statement in my hand, and with the exception of the *impression* that there were more trees on the pelouse than is actually the case, the description would be reasonably correct today.

It would be as well at this point to consider the



The Belvedere or Temple of Music. The "kiosk" of "An Adventure". Photograph taken from the point at which the "running man" appeared.

often affirmed statement that the grass in front of the house *grew right up to the terrace*, and that it was rough grass.

This year I noticed that the grass in this area was cut fairly short, presumably by some form of motor lawn-mower, and when I was there it had just been freshly run over. Assuming, therefore, that a hand mower was used in 1901, as there were then no motor units available, and that it had not been cut for some days, the impression of rough grass might easily have been afforded. The grass is not even now of fine quality, but like a field which has been used for some time as a lawn.

But the main point in this connection is the reference to its growing right up to the north terrace.

My contention is that this was never the case, and that a path or drive has always separated the terrace itself from the lawn in front. It is, in any case, unlikely that the lawn would be allowed to grow untidily up against the actual stonework.

In M. Léon Rey's book there is a sketch showing this lawn, with the house in the background. The illustration is described as from the "collection Parmentier" and "d'après une aquarelle ayant appartenu à la Reine", and clearly shows a wide path between the terrace and the edge of the grass. This would seem to contradict Miss Jourdain's information to the effect that up to 1835 the grass had grown right up to the terrace

as described, and there is little reason to think that it ever did so.

In this illustration the trees surrounding the lawn are placed much as they are today, and there are none on the lawn itself, as Miss Moberly seemed to think.

It is interesting to note that it was not until 1779 that the old theatre which formerly stood on this site was finally demolished. That would allow a maximum of ten years for any trees which were subsequently planted thereon to reach the maturity suggested in the impression the authors give at the time they first saw it.

Therefore at all material times—those during which the Queen was in occupation—the lawn as far as we can now see has been, and must have actually appeared, much as it is today.

I have often been surprised in reading the details of the research that no mention was ever made of a particularly prominent tree which stands at the edge of the lawn near the eastern end of the house. This is now of great age, and spreads itself out over a very large area. Other trees are specifically mentioned, notably the one nearly opposite, on the site of the old “jeu de bague”; but this one, a Japanese specimen which Marie-Antoinette herself planted, has escaped attention. It can be seen in nearly all photos of the Trianon taken from the English garden.

CHAPTER XII

THE LADY

IF the pathetic illusion which underlies *The Adventure* was due in the first place to some twist of the imagination, caught up in a momentary setting of unique advantage around the incident of the "running man", it might never have survived without the stimulating vision of the mysterious lady. From the point in the records at which Miss Jourdain introduced this daring speculation, the whole amazing labour of investigation takes on an air of new enthusiasm and new hope. "She might have been the Queen herself."

Most casual observers who did not take the trouble to examine or even read the whole story must have pictured it essentially as a vision of the romantic Queen. Before having the story brought before me in detail, I should have so described it, even if dismissing it immediately as just one more legend woven around a figure of universal glamour.

The authors have laboured even harder and more persistently in support of this aspect of their speculations than of all the other details combined, and it behoves us therefore to devote

attention to it in keeping with its special import. We are asked to believe that on August 10th, 1901, Miss Moberly, though not Miss Jourdain, saw Marie-Antoinette sitting against the terrace at the Trianon, sketching. Miss Moberly could afterwards describe her dress and appearance in minute detail, though Miss Jourdain limits her acquaintance with her to a feeling of presence which she remembered afterwards when the idea had thoroughly taken root.

The reader will have long since foreseen the present writer's belief as to the real nature of this central incident. Somewhere, if still living, there is a lady, perhaps English—since her dress appeared to be in keeping with that of English tourists of her day—who may even yet possess the sketch or painting perhaps hastily executed during that hot afternoon at Versailles. I would dearly love to have that picture, for whatever its character—a few brief lines—an uncompleted outline—suggestions of a tree-trunk—it is the work of a queen ! A queen who lived for eleven years in the hearts and memories of her devoted creators, and on in the pages of history for a further two decades.

Miss Moberly's original account of this incident runs as follows :

“There was a terrace round the north and west sides of the house, and on the rough grass, which grew right up to it, a lady was sitting, holding out a paper as though to look at it from arms’

length. I supposed her to be sketching, and to have brought her own camp-stool. It seemed as though she must be making a study of trees, for they grew close in front of her, and there seemed to be nothing else to sketch. She saw us, and when we passed close by on her left hand she turned and looked full at us. It was not a young face, and (though rather pretty) it did not attract me. She had on a shady white hat perched on a good deal of fair hair that fluffed round her forehead. Her light summer dress was arranged on her shoulders in handkerchief fashion, and there was a little line of either green or gold near the edge of the handkerchief, which showed me it was over, not tucked into, her bodice, which was cut low. Her dress was long-waisted, with a good deal of fullness in the skirt, which seemed to be short. *'I thought she was a tourist'* [?], but that her dress was old-fashioned and rather unusual—though people were wearing fichu bodices that summer—I looked straight at her ; but some indescribable feeling made me turn away, annoyed at her being there."

This description was first recorded three months after the incident. "I thought she was a tourist."

I have read and re-read this passage many times, trying to visualise the writers' impressions, and have come to the conclusion that they are essentially synthetic. One would almost expect after

the first "brief" details that the lady's chest and waist measurements were to follow, with notes on the quality of materials! And yet Miss Jourdain never even saw her—a fact which, to the authors, seemed to have the greatest significance and to me only goes to show how ordinary and natural the encounter must really have appeared to both.

When I was at the Trianon this year I counted no less than five persons either sketching or painting, two at the house itself and three at the Hameau, and photographers, who are always very much in evidence now, would be fewer at the beginning of the century.

There seems little doubt that in recalling the exact position of the sketching tourist the authors have blundered considerably, and in doing so have introduced another element of topographical error which strengthens the illusion of changed scenery.

According to Miss Moberly, she was sitting against the terrace opposite the western end of the house, approximately opposite the end window. They walked up to her, leaving her slightly on the left hand as they passed up the steps to the terrace, from whence they saw her again from behind, "and noticed her fichu had become pale green".

Now, Miss Jourdain insists that the steps she went up were not the present ones leading from the corner of the French garden, and she had gone to immense trouble in trying to find evidence

of different steps, leading directly up from the English garden, which she considers were the ones used in 1901. I cannot see the slightest reason for this observation.

Reference to the conditions at this point known to have been existing in 1789 only complicates the issue still further, since at that time, owing to the existence of the "jeu de bague" (long since removed), there was no access to the terrace except by the present central steps, to which the authors never refer. They are convinced that they used steps which were located somewhere between the central flight and the present ones from the French garden, when to me it seems obvious that it was the latter up which they actually did ascend.

Miss Moberly still further complicates this involved issue by suggesting that as the "jeu de bague" was in position in 1789 it accounted for her inability to see the chapel, or anything of the French garden, until she actually reached the terrace. But as the contemporary pictures of this structure show it to have been joined to the terrace by a high wall, and with no steps anywhere near it, this only confounds the issue still further. Moreover, in making this suggestion she implies that, with all her keen appreciation of detail, she could not remember the appearance of this unusual and striking building, which was an odd structure of Chinese design, having a sort of roundabout in front of it on which the Queen and her friends used to amuse themselves.

The idea of this building seems never to have occurred to her until she had read of it in historical records of the place.

There seems little doubt to my mind that the sketching tourist was sitting against the extended wall which gives the authors so much trouble, and considerably farther to the westward than they placed her afterwards, when the rest of the description becomes much more in keeping with the probable facts.

It was 4 p.m. in the afternoon, and at that time in summer the spot I have in mind is comfortably shaded, and generally it is a spot at which anyone provided with a camp-stool would be tempted to rest. Further, a stranger approaching the house from the front would instantly see that there was no door on that side, and would tend to seek access to the terrace at a point nearest the western side, where there would more likely be an opening to the main entrance. In doing so they would take the present French garden steps which are just round the end of the extended wall, which would hardly be noticed by a newcomer—especially if someone was sitting against it tending to shorten its apparent length.

The whole confusion regarding these steps seems to have arisen as a result of Miss Moberly's inability to recall the wall and the few steps round the end of it which had to be negotiated to reach the stone staircase, and as far as I can see any effort to refer this difference to the

conditions of 1789 makes the whole thing far more difficult. None of the ancient conditions in any way coincide with her 1901 memory, whereas with only the slightest fault in her memory of them they meet the present conditions admirably.

A glance at the picture in M. Léon Rey's book makes this doubly clear, for with the ancient "jeu de bague" *in situ*, the topographical details described in the original statements become completely meaningless. I feel sure that the authors cannot have seen a contemporary illustration of the "jeu de bague" or they would have hesitated before even suggesting its existence at the time in support of this incident.

In any event, having once entertained the idea of this visitor being the Queen herself, they embarked on the usual programme of identification, all of which appears to me to be singularly unimpressive.

As in the case of all the other special points considered, once identification with ancient conditions had been embarked upon, all obvious natural objections seem to have been totally disregarded.

For instance, Miss Moberly ascertained that from May 1789 to October of the same year, owing to the strained relations between the monarchy and the nation, visitors had been allowed to wander about the Trianon gardens as they liked, though not actually on the terraces and private areas. Under such circumstances,

even if the Queen were in residence, which is very doubtful, would she be likely to leave the urgent privacy of her apartments to come and sit where everyone could see her, some distance from any easy line of retreat, on the grass in front of the north terrace?

I am myself almost convinced that in October 1789 the Queen was not in residence at the Trianon at all, and if the legend of the running messenger finding her in the grotto is true, then she had gone there for a walk directly from the Palace. Incidentally, Miss Moberly remarks that on approaching the house she noticed that all the windows were shuttered! With the exception of one into which they tried to look from the west terrace. Could this have been so if the Queen was in occupation at the time? Although using the comment in my own favour, I find it difficult to reconcile the fact with the later account of the authors' tour of the house in the company of a French wedding-party, which can hardly have taken place behind shuttered windows.

Léon Rey, in his *tableau chronologique*, gives a schedule of dates during which the Queen was in residence at the Trianon. According to this, the last time appears as "1788, from 1st to 25th of August", whilst for the year 1789—"pas de séjour". And since the dates are very exact and regular for a period of over sixteen years, the record would at least appear reliable.

All the available evidence therefore is most

unfavourable to the possibility of the Queen being at the Trianon on the material date, a consideration which, in the exuberance of their search for less important details, the authors seem to have overlooked.

Continuing her evidence on this count, Miss Jourdain resorts to various contemporary intimate works dealing with Marie-Antoinette and her life at Trianon, amongst which is the *Journal de Madame Eloffé*.

From this journal she implies what we can only assume to be an actual recognition of the dress she was wearing at the time she was "seen" in 1901.

"Madame Eloffé repaired several light washing, short skirts, and made, in July and September, two green silk bodices, besides many large white fichus. This agrees exactly with the dress seen in 1901. The skirt was not of fresh white, but was light-coloured—slightly yellowish."

The journal of Madame Eloffé was not read until seven years after the alleged apparition, yet the exact shade of her skirt was recalled, though at the time of the first glimpse of the *ensemble* it was thought to be the dress of an ordinary tourist ! Such a feat of memory, where the necessity for exactitude cannot have been premeditated, simply passes understanding.

It must be remembered that there are a

number of independent legends surrounding the Queen, in most of which she is said to appear, usually seated, in various parts of her domain. All figures of deep romance inspire these superstitions, but their very prevalence would be calculated to stimulate the imagination of minds already deeply committed, in some inexplicable manner, to a composite illusion, tangible enough to form the basis of *An Adventure*.

CHAPTER XIII

THE JEU DE BAGUE

WE have already referred to this ancient device which has long since disappeared from the Trianon, having been pulled down some time during the middle of the nineteenth century. It would seem that at last its incongruous unsuitability was realised, and the general appearance of the north front of the house thereby immeasurable improved.

Miss Moberly, with 1789 in mind, uses the existence of the jeu de bague to explain what she described as a "barrier" obstructing the view on her right-hand side as she approached the house. Walking over the same ground, I cannot see that anything other than present aspects are required to recall this impression. And we have already noted that, had the jeu de bague been in its old position her description of the appearance of things at this point would be hopelessly in error.

Miss Moberly remarks that, owing to this vague "barrier", "we could see nothing but the meadow on our left hand, and the house with its terrace in front", but makes no reference to the striking and unique Chinese monstrosity

which would have been easily remembered by its quaint appearance. There is a large and shadowy tree still standing on the site of this structure which today almost completely blocks the view on the right-hand side of anyone taking the course she describes, and I can see no reason to find a substitute for it in confirmation of a very fair remembered picture of the scene.

The authors remark that the *jeu de bague* was a circular building masked by trees, though in the illustration referred to in the last chapter it was nothing of the sort. The *jeu de bague* itself was a kind of mechanical riding-school, not unlike a primitive roundabout, having dragons and horses on which the players rode, playing a game not unlike "tent-pegging". Around the western side of the machine there stood a semi-circular gallery in Chinese design, from which, presumably, spectators watched the competitions. This, with the usual prodigality characterising every activity at the Trianon, was joined to the house itself by an underground passage, so that visitors could walk the few yards between them without getting wet in winter, whilst at a later date an elaborate tent-like awning connected the gallery to the theatre some distance away with the same object.

The Chapel Man

"Whilst we were standing at the south-west corner of the terrace above the French garden,

the door of a building at right angles to the house suddenly opened, and a young man came out and slammed the door behind him. He came to us very quickly along a level. His manner was jaunty and imperious, and he told us that the only way to the house was by the cour d'honneur. It was difficult to hear what he said. We thought at once that we were trespassing, and looked for some way down the terrace, upon which he constituted himself our guide, and with an inquisitive, amused expression went with us a little way down the French garden, and showed us out into the avenue by a broad road. There is much to say about this incident" (Miss Moberly continues, and notes): "He was the second person that afternoon who had excitedly insisted on our going one way rather than another . . . no one has ever stopped us since, nor can we hear of anyone else who has been guided as we were."

But the first instance of guidance was specifically requested by the authors, when they asked the gardeners *twice* how to find the house, the running man being undoubtedly associated with this request.

The spot on which they found themselves at the moment in question is somewhat uniquely embarrassing to anyone endeavouring to gain entry to the house itself. One can look over the wall at this point and see everyone going in and out (as they did), but there is no apparent

access to the front entrance without climbing a very high wall with a drop of some twelve feet on its other side. To a stranger there is no obvious way round at all, and the only possible detour could never be found without guidance. We learn that the visitors were in the act of examining an unshuttered window, and they refer to their "bewilderment". There was still chivalry in France, even in 1901, and what could be more natural than that some young employee, accustomed to seeing visitors "trapped" at this point, should run up quickly, taking the few short steps in his stride, and, walking to them over the remaining *thirty yards* of level terrace, offer to show them the way out?

I have spent much time on this spot, from which the upper part of the chapel door is visible, and the few steps up which the man would run are quite *invisible*, there being no reason for a stranger to realise their existence. Approached suddenly from behind (they were at the time looking at the unshuttered window), and turning round at the sound of running footsteps, it would be singularly easy to imagine that the man had come from the chapel door and, not having seen him mount the steps, that he had approached them on one level. The sound of the "banging door", which if really remembered (not in Miss Jourdain's original statement) would have taken place some few seconds before the man himself was sighted, could easily have been the sound of dropped tools, the dis-



carding of a wheelbarrow, or even the hasty stumble up the flight of steps.

I came to the conclusion that had I been approached at that moment by someone who had not been seen to climb the short steps I should certainly have described him as having come to me *along the terrace*, and at least from the direction of the white door if that detail had happened to fix itself in my memory at all.

But it would seem that by the time Miss Moberly had come to rebuild the situation in its ancient setting, all question of trying to find a natural solution had long since been abandoned, and a most elaborate structure of historical detail is offered to cover the occurrence.

Not unnaturally, with so many first-hand records at her disposal, Miss Jourdain was able to obtain the name of the Queen's concierge, who, again not unnaturally, was found to live in rooms at the back of the chapel. From this it was presumed that the man concerned had been working in a loft which has a window overlooking the terrace, and had been so alarmed at finding strangers there as to run out at once to safeguard the sacred precincts of the house, whilst the Queen herself remained, presumably, still seated against the terrace wall where the intruders had just passed her.

As far as we know, the authors do not claim to have noticed anything unusual about the clothing of the "chapel man", and it would rather appear that his inclusion in the list of

ghostly encounters appears somewhat late in the story as they themselves conceived it.

In view of these observations, it seems scarcely necessary to examine too closely the details which were extracted from the history of the place, and which aim mainly at proving how impossible it would have been for the white door to have been opened, or banged, by anyone in 1901. In the first place, there has been no internal access to this door within the living memory of anyone. It opened at one time from the now isolated gallery in the chapel, the stairs to which have long since broken down and been removed. The authors admit that to reach them from any position in which the concierge would have been likely to have been working would have involved a longish journey, a climb up these vanished stairs, and a run along the gallery, *et cetera*—in any case an effort demanding great urgency. Whereas the gardener of our theory could have reached them in a few seconds.

But the evidence on which they base the strongest claim concerns a fortunate find, only half proved, that at some remote date the terrace had been maintained on a level with the chapel door. This information is deduced from odd remarks and notes in the archives elsewhere, from which it would appear that at one time the house was connected to the kitchen buildings (lying beyond the chapel) by a continuous ground-floor passage. It is possible that this may have been so, or at least that the lay-out

plied", joining the bit of terrace outside chapel door to the terrace by the house. *could have been the level way along which our* *ne to us."*

, it is, I think, more than probable that was at one time a ground-floor passage from the house to the kitchens, and that it may had a flat top. But surely, evidence for ce, it is easier to imagine a slightly wrong sion of how the man came along the than to displace him by over a hundred n time and rebuild the terrace to plans of oubletful character in order to ensure his g a few yards farther on one level.

must be remembered that on such details se the authors had the long lapse of time uch in their favour. It is obvious that a n such as the Trianon, with its several s, and the known extravagance of the Im- era, would suffer endless improvements and ions during the period of over one hundred and it would seem only necessary to

search long enough to find confirmation for a very wide range of topographical and architectural differences. I am myself very doubtful about the early construction of this terrace, as, to use the words of Miss Moberly's friend, the French colonel, the present arrangement is "bien symetrique". Also the description of the covered passage, with the covered way, through which the Queen could walk to the chapel was only hearsay, gathered from someone who showed the authors through the chapel courtyard.

I think there have certainly been alterations made at this point at some time or other, but fail to see how such an exact reconstruction can be justified from the sources of information available. In any case, the evidence is only faintly relevant in view of all the other considerations surrounding the alleged incident, but in fairness to the authors it must be included.

"We did not lose sight of the man when he came to us", Miss Moberly notes, implying, of course, that they did not see him descend the steps from the chapel door and remount the ones to the terrace. But it seems certain to me that they did not see him at all until he had reached the terrace, after which he *would* approach them on the level as described.

Why also does not Léon Rey mention this covered passage and the covered way to the chapel, when both the underground way to the jeu de bague and even the tent-like awning to the theatre are specially referred to?

"The road from the garden to the avenue (through which the man ushered us) was not far from the chapel, and was broad enough to admit a coach. The present one is narrower and farther to the west."

I cannot agree with this observation and its alleged confirmation, and hold, after careful examination, that the authors were led out by passing down the French garden and through the present opening.

Confirmation of this last change in the scenery and buildings is sought in two directions, both of which appear very unreliable.

In the first place, Mique's map shows somewhat vaguely what might have been an opening rather nearer the chapel than the present one, though this does not appear to be open at its inner end, but closed by a wall. Whereas in the same map the present opening is shown to be open at both ends and much as it is today. A close examination of this map seems also to show the same wall which at present covers the outer end of the existing opening, though not the small door in it through which one has to pass. The authors have seized on the very doubtful impression of a second opening or carriage-way to meet their case, with scanty justification.

Further researches on the spot convinced the authors that they had found the remains of the second opening, and they mention a change in direction of the paving-stones at the point in

question, implying the one-time existence of a carriage-drive. Miss Moberly also refers to "the jamb of an old opening still projecting from the building". I searched long and thoroughly for both of these features but could find nothing. Neither can I see the slightest trace of "the marks of an opening of some sort" on the avenue side.

Nor do I consider any further confirmation necessary on so indefinite an impression. "The road from the garden to the avenue was not far from the chapel." Neither is the present one. "It was wide enough to admit a coach." The width of the present opening is over twelve feet, but no coach could now enter it, owing to its being closed at one end except for an ordinary door. Possibly quite a recent feature.

Also, had the authors emerged into the avenue by the imagined nearer opening, a further statement at once becomes contradictory. "We came out sufficiently near the first lane we had been in to make me wonder why the garden officials had not directed us back instead of telling us to go forward." Even the present opening would make this rather an exaggeration, and an impossible observation had they emerged into the avenue still farther to the eastward.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TWO LABOURERS WITH A CART

MISS MOBERLY recalls that on her second visit, in January 1902, Miss Jourdain saw in a field near the Hameau two labourers, in brown tunics and bright-coloured short capes, loading a cart with sticks. The capes hardly came below their shoulders, and had hoods ; one was bright blue and the other red.

These men were presumed to be apparitions, and the evidence supporting this is based on the following observations from the archives :

"In 1906 we discovered that the tunic and short cape were worn by the *bourgeoisie* in the *fourteenth century*."

"In 1908 we had 'proof' that artisans were wearing them in the eighteenth century, and that some of the men at the Trianon in 1776 had 'hardes de couleur'."

In August 1908 Miss Moberly learned from a gardener that "carts of the present day in France had scarcely altered at all in type, and that the two now used at Trianon . . . were of the old pattern."

It would seem hardly necessary to comment further on the above observations, which I leave

to the consideration of the reader as they stand. Were these men ghosts or contemporary labourers using one of the present-day carts?

The Tall Gardener

Miss Jourdain (during her walk in 1902) "then went along the upper path, and when between the Escargot hill and the Belvedere, she met a very tall gardener of apparently great strength, with long, muscular arms. She thought that, with his long hair and grizzled, untidy beard and general appearance, he had the look of an Englishman rather than a Frenchman. He was dressed in a rough knitted jersey, and a small dark-blue round cap was set at the back of his head. She inquired where she would find the Queen's grotto, and he walked a little way beside her to show her the way."

Now, no actual claim seems to have been made that this man was a supernatural being, and in view of the trivial evidence against his being a perfectly normal person the authors seem to have been satisfied with a mere implication.

Their reason for giving him special mention seems to be that he directed Miss Moberly to what she considered was the correct site of the Queen's grotto, to the west side of the Belvedere, near the theatre.

As though to weaken the case for his supernatural character, Miss Moberly points out that

the authors managed after much work to extract from the old gardeners' wages book the name of a man who was known at the time as "l'Anglais" (probably a nickname), and, jumping to the conclusion that this bore directly on Miss Jourdain's vague impression of his English appearance, included it as the counterpart identity in the case.

The only real lead in the case was the name of the man who had been known as "l'Anglais" in the wages book.

"We found, some years later, that this position had been accepted as correct" (p. 106). And yet in M. Léon Rey's very recent book the grotto is most definitely shown on the Escargot site, and no reference made anywhere even in his detailed schedule to its ever having been elsewhere.

I strongly suspect that Miss Moberly had grave doubts herself as to the supernatural nature of this person, for amongst all her "points" he is treated with the least degree of finality, and specifically as one of Miss Jourdain's perquisites.

Mique's Map

All throughout the long research the authors have relied for topographical confirmation on the ancient map by Mique, the Queen's landscape gardener, who eventually followed his royal mistress to the guillotine.

A very close study of the photographic reproduction of this map has convinced me that in drawing their many conclusions they have used more imagination than could be justified. The map is exceedingly vague as to detail, and it is impossible in many places to distinguish with certainty between walls, openings, paths, and flower-beds, etc. The claim to have located an indication of the Queen's grotto on the site behind the rocher is simply incomprehensible, for this spot appears to me, even through a

microscope, exactly like all the surrounding ground—an irregular stretch of uneven ground interspersed with badly defined paths.

Even the recognised grotto is quite indistinguishable from its immediate surroundings, and it seems unreasonable to fix anything beyond very general dimensions in any part of the enlarged section.

As to the openings through the kitchen buildings, beyond the fact that some sort of second opening (now no longer there) is vaguely indicated, nothing at all can be gathered as to their nature or width. Actually, in the map *neither* opening appears to give a passage right through, though the one farthest from the chapel (the present one) would be accurate today if it included a small door on the avenue side. I am myself very much of the opinion that the second opening relied upon by the authors is not a "through" opening at all.

The Belvedere is indicated, and also the *position* of the rocher bridge, but there is nothing to confirm the flat terrace linking the house with the chapel, or the existence of the alleged covered way to the chapel and kitchens.

Also the object which Miss Jourdain takes for her vanished cottage is, I think, some other and less important kind of building, a potting-shed or "lean-to" outhouse, for instance. Its indication on the map would seem to have influenced the authors against the evidence of their memories (recorded) in shifting the scene of their meeting

with the guards to a point from which I claim to have effectually dislodged them.

Actually, the map in question is almost useless, except as a very general guide to relative positions and approximate dimensions. It varies hopelessly from accurate modern plans, and is sketchy and untidy on all matters of detail.

Like all plans of the Trianon itself, it fails to give any definite indication of the construction of the terrace between the house and the chapel, which is shown in every case as a conventionally curved corner piece, matching up symmetrically the corresponding section at the other end. Probably the landscape gardeners of 1780, when the profession was in its infancy, were not skilled cartographers, and would employ professional architects in all matters appertaining to actual buildings, walls, etc., confining their attention to general effects and forestry considerations. It seems certain that Mique's map was never intended for accurate surveying of a type necessary to the authors in making their difficult deductions, and far too much importance has been placed upon its apparent revelations. It seems, however, reasonable to suppose that it is quite authentic in all other respects.

I have not myself seen the original, but it is clear from the very excellent photographic enlargement that nothing further could be deduced by doing so, as the microscope brings out every detail as far as its accuracy allows.

Incidentally, the original is very valuable,

having on it a number of comments in Louis Sixteenth's own handwriting.

In Section IV of the Appendix to the last edition of *An Adventure* Miss Moberly recounts what she seems to consider corroborative evidence bearing on the haunting of the Trianon and Versailles—a most extraordinary series of happenings related by an American family.

These people, Mr. and Mrs. C. and their artist son, lived for some time in the rue Maurepas at Versailles, and their rooms looked over the bassin de Neptune, an ornamental corner of the great park containing a number of statues and artificial waters, etc. They were all three firmly convinced that everything inside the park was more or less haunted, and make the most astonishing and sweeping observations, which no one else in this well-populated street and district seems to have been able to corroborate.

Amongst other things, they state that “no wind ever seemed to blow inside the park, though other people declared that there was just as much as outside”. Presumably the trees, which at this point extend outside the railings, must have been in natural motion up to an exact dividing line, beyond which they remained fixed and rigid! “Except for a very occasional breeze. . . . It was only in 1908 that they actually saw people they could not account for.” I saw innumerable such people on my various visits, but failed to attach any importance to them. “They asked if Miss Moberly had seen a

cottage outside the Trianons, and she at once described one between the canal and the avenue which, in 1901, she had walked past but never saw again." . . . Miss Moberly had seen it without a roof, with three bare walls and a raised floor. Mr. C. had seen it whole, six or seven years later, with people in old-fashioned clothes looking out of the window ; but he could not always see it ! It appeared and disappeared and reappeared in an extraordinary way.

I have seen this cottage, one of the original gardener's houses, and it stands amongst trees some way back from the avenue. It is difficult to locate, and very easy to miss when trying to spot it from a carriage or when walking along the avenue, as there is no means of fixing its position amongst the trees. Its present condition is particularly good, suggesting that it has probably been re-roofed or renovated at least within the last twenty years, and may well have been noticed whilst under reconstruction. In any case, with such a strange vision before him, why did not Mr. C. make immediate inquiries on the spot ?

Of course they had seen the "Queen"—all three together—usually sitting in some part of the grounds on a camp-stool, and dressed in the same cream-coloured skirt in which Miss Moberly had seen her. This skirt seems to have given her good service. On two occasions she had been sketching, presumably in daylight. "They never doubted she was ghostly, on account of the way

in which she appeared and disappeared, seeming to grow out of, and retire into, the scenery with a little quiver of adjustment. The last point we assured them we had specially noticed, when the 'running man' first settled his feet on the ground" (p. 116). *Specially noticed*, remember, when for over a week the incident had not caused them the slightest astonishment.

This "quiver of adjustment" appears from time to time throughout the whole story. It is highly suggestive, and in a way impressive, until one remembers that in all natural parallel cases the "quiver" is caused by the *medium of vision* (cinema projector lens, or shaky binoculars, etc), and testifies strongly to a purely *subjective* fault in recognition.

There is a wine-shop somewhere in China outside which hangs the figure of a common soldier. Below it is a notice which reminds customers that when this soldier *looks like a field-marshal* you have had enough.

As artists, they carefully noticed the lady, and the second time they saw her "Mr. C. was overcome with such 'terrific fatigue' that they all went home". One wonders whether for different reasons our soldier would in this case have enjoyed promotion! There is a very thin line dividing fatigue from many forms of neurosis, and Mr. C. eventually had to leave Versailles altogether owing to the "strange atmosphere", which everyone else found perfectly healthy.

Mr. C. also heard music coming from the

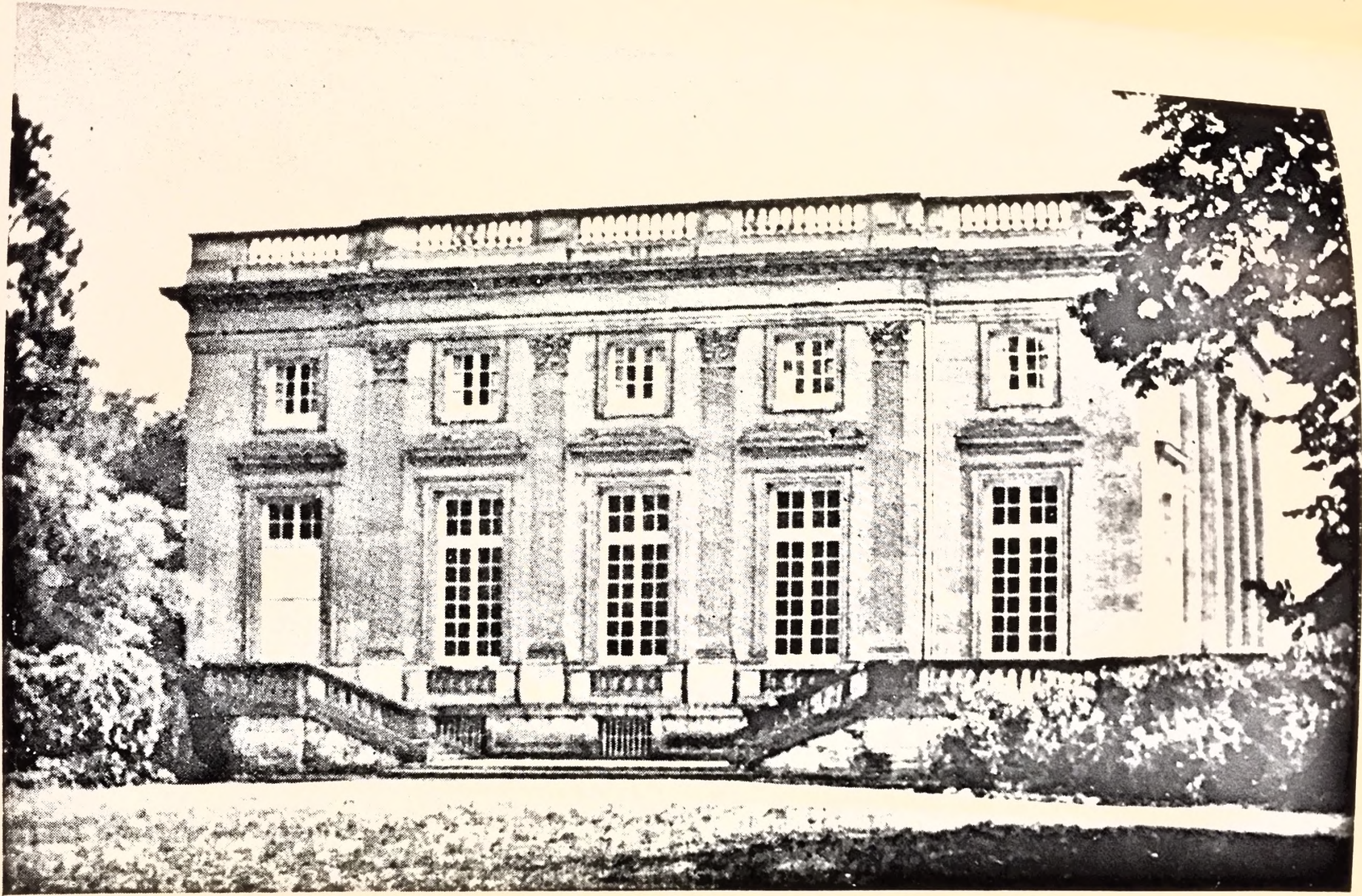
Belvedere, but did not apparently think it worth while investigating. They heard curious hissing sounds. One of the commonest early symptoms of neurasthenia is the persistence of hissing and whistling sounds in the patient's head, accompanied by "fatigue" in a multitude of various forms, whilst the eyesight is affected as to focus and stability in a large percentage of cases. The impression of distant music has been experienced at times by almost everyone in enfeebled or fevered condition.

As far as can be gathered, these imaginative Americans had seen almost every mysterious happening reported in the authors' story, including the grass which grew up to the terrace front, the missing steps from the English garden, innumerable "figures" dressed in ancient costumes, and the missing cottages.

There is one paragraph of which I can make absolutely nothing (p. 115).

Referring to the cottage between the canal and the avenue (not actually in the Trianon gardens themselves, but in part of the great park), the authors state: "Miss Moberly had seen it without a roof, with three bare walls and a raised floor, and *she now considered that the whole series of experiences had begun from the time when she stepped up on to the floor.*"

There is no other reference which I can find relating to her having ever been near the cottage itself, and the conclusion above appears completely without meaning.



After leaving Versailles as a home in 1909, these Americans occasionally went back to it, and had noticed with surprise that at those times (which were quite normal) the Petit Trianon had seemed smaller and more open than before, but that the Grand Trianon seemed much larger than when seen in eighteenth-century aspects.

This latter observation is the only rational comment attributable to these helpful people, as the illusion of changing dimensions in revisiting old scenes after a lapse of time is well known to everybody, and rather goes to indicate that a change of domicile had benefited their mental health.

I regard the whole story in so far as the American family are concerned as little more than a sidelight on the peculiar mentality of its members, particularly Mr. C., and its inclusion quite unworthy of the otherwise formidable creation of the authors.

CHAPTER XV

A QUEEN'S MEMORY

ALTHOUGH closing her book on a note of interrogation, Miss Moberly has, since early in the day, toyed persistently with a conception of great beauty and pathos.

It has seemed to her that possibly on August 10th, 1901, she and her friend had somehow "entered into an act of the Queen's memory", and hints that the feelings of depression and restricted movement might have been accounted for in this way.

August 10th, 1792, was the day on which the Tuileries was sacked and the Royal Family escaped to the Hall of Assembly, where they were penned up for many hours, hearing themselves practically deposed, and within sound of the massacre of the Swiss guards and their servants. "What more likely, we thought, than that during those hours in the hall of the Assembly, or in the Conciergerie, she had gone back in such vivid memory to other Augusts spent at Trianon that some impress of it was imparted to the place?"

The association of this alleged memory with the incident of the urgent messenger at the Queen's grotto (the running man) would fix this

memory to one of October 5th, 1789, and in admitting the theory, all the other conditions at Trianon must coincide with this date, as indeed we are led to believe.

Now firstly, as I have remarked before, it is very doubtful whether the Queen was ever at Trianon at all during 1789. But even had this been established, the extravagant theory is innocent of any continuity.

If, for instance, one could countenance it in respect of the authors' encounter with the "running man" and follow their assumption that the incident refers in some way to the Queen's legendary meeting with the hurrying messenger at the grotto, then it becomes quite untenable in the case of the chapel man or the vision of the Queen herself. For to achieve these recaptured episodes they would perforce have had to enter the "acts of memory" of several different people within the space of half an hour.

Consider also the detail afforded in the authors' descriptions of the persons encountered. Would the Queen ever have conceived such detail in a poignant and fleeting glimpse into the past?

This very beautiful and pathetic conception is the motif for an imaginative appendix to early editions of *An Adventure* which, if shorn of its impossible implications, would be worthy of independent publication. For in her *Reverie* Miss Moberly draws a picture of the last scenes at Trianon and the dreadful days immediately following the fall of the Tuileries with such feeling

and tenderness as one rarely encounters in authentic history

It is the best thing *An Adventure* has to offer, and it is not included in the latest editions.

Nevertheless, the tentative "explanation" can have no value outside the realms of fantasy. No one has ever been known to enter the "act of memory" of another, nor can the term itself be applied other than subjectively, though even then it would appear to be an exaggeration in terms.

Miscellaneous Contradictions and Comments

There are a number of minor observations which have not properly suited me for inclusion in the several sections dealing with specific incidents, and which I will now consider separately.

Page 19. Miss Jourdain, whilst searching for the site of the "vanished kiosk", stumbled upon a piece of stone column still standing, on what she considered was very near the "right" position. "It cannot have been put there lately as it was well inside the tree which was growing round it." She made a sketch of it. I myself found this stone column, still where she first saw it, and also made a rough sketch. Armed with this, I toured the whole garden looking for something which might give me a clue to its identity. I found it at the foot of the terrace to the French garden, where several other exactly similar short

columns are placed as ornaments. The one in question almost certainly came from that part of the terrace which was removed when the jeu de bague was pulled down, and there will probably be others about the place somewhere.

Page 40. A further description of the alleged grotto is to be found in the authors' preface. "It was a narrow path, having rocks on one side, and deeply shaded by trees, completely shutting out any view."

The "rocks on one side" here is very significant, as it is known that the Queen's original grotto was constructed entirely of rock, whilst the present rocher bridge has a prominent rock on one side only. The persistent avoidance of any mention of the lake, which can now be seen alongside the rocher bridge, or indeed anywhere in the description of this part of the garden, is negatived by Miss Jourdain's unpublished original statement regarding the danger of falling into the water. There is no other water, other than this lake, which could possibly suggest this imagined fall. If they saw the lake at all the description of the imaginary grotto at once becomes invalid, since they insist that it was situated behind the rocher and, owing to its character, excluded all outside views. We have, however, Miss Jourdain's unpublished statement regarding the water, which could not possibly refer to a "threadlike cascade". Imagine anyone fearing to fall into a "threadlike cascade"! "As we walked, I found myself wondering", Miss

Jourdain remarks, "whether anyone had ever stumbled over from the path *into the water on our left*."

Page 41. Referring to their previous knowledge of the Trianon, Miss Moberly remarks "... and had not even read Baedeker on the subject".

Now, Baedeker's guide for 1900 has little to say beyond giving general directions and a very brief account of the architectural features of the Trianon, but we have it from Miss Moberly that whilst sitting in the Palace before starting on their walk they referred to this guide for general directions. It took me exactly three minutes to read the whole relevant section, and it seems more than likely that the authors did so on that occasion.

Page 41. We learn that "though on the afternoon of our first visit to the Petit Trianon there were moments of oppression, yet we were not asleep, nor in a trance, nor even greatly surprised—astonishment came later". This seems to illustrate the main contention that perfectly normal experiences were afterwards decked out in the clothing and colour of mystery, which deepened and consolidated itself as imagination gave way to new "memories".

Page 45. Contrast this with a passage in the original statement: "Everything suddenly looked unnatural, therefore unpleasant; even the trees behind the building seemed to have become flat and lifeless, *like a wood worked in tapestry* [original italics]. There were no effects of light and shade,

and no wind stirred the trees. It was intensely still." But they were "not even surprised" !

Page 58. Miss Moberly, when talking to her brother, was asked whether the last man they had seen (the chapel man) was a real person. She "assured him with great amusement that we had not the smallest doubt as to the reality of them all" !

Page 63. On revisiting the Trianon in 1902, Miss Jourdain assured Miss Moberly that the place was entirely different. "The distances were much less than we had imagined : and the ground was so bare that the house and the Hameau were in full view of one another ; and that there was nothing unnatural about the trees."

In 1937 I considered this statement on the spot, and I cannot agree that normally, in summer, the Hameau and the house are easily visible simultaneously, except from certain directions. As to the distances seeming much less, I have already referred to this well-known impression when revisiting a place for the second time.

Page 65. Both these impressions are again referred to here as though great importance is attached to them.

Page 88. "According to the old picture by L'Espinasse (1793) there was nothing over the low bridge . . . but there was by the side of it, just where the grotto would have ended, a cavern in a rock." The rocher was built before 1793,

and the cavern would be the present one at its southern side. This would indicate further confusion between the "rocher and the vanished grotto".

Page 110. The walk with the two French gentlemen. No new evidence of any value seems to have arisen from this expedition. The French officer was able to confirm certain details already known regarding ancient uniforms, and to cite vague probabilities regarding the cottages which might at some time have existed in the grounds. I suspect that their final conclusions, though polite, were entirely uncompromising. "They were ready to accept the story as it stood", which might mean anything.

It should be noted in connection with Miss Jourdain's impression of not at first being able to see the house and the Hameau at the same time, but being able to do so on her second visit. On their first walk such simultaneous views would be quite impossible owing to the nature of the ground, but in 1902 Miss Jourdain was in localities from which they could be seen simultaneously.

CHAPTER XVI

APPENDICES—CONCLUSION

CONSIDERABLE correspondence in the *Listener* and elsewhere followed a talk I gave from the B.B.C. in October of last year when the story of *An Adventure* was broadcast for the first time.

There were the usual apologists who offered "solutions" in monotonous conformity with their particular brand of superstition—some brilliant and searching comments, well worth answering, and a number of frankly abusive gibes. In answer to one, I wrote as follows ; the letter being subsequently published in the then current issue of the *Listener* :

"I was very interested in the letter of your correspondent Mr. ——— relating to the talk I gave on the Mystery at Versailles, and agree with him on several of his comments, though I cannot see eye to eye on others. I have ample evidence that the history of the Petit Trianon itself was completely unknown to the authors, and the subsequent research seems all along to confirm this view. Baedeker has practically nothing to say on the matter, and all French histories are inclined to treat this particular

part of the domain with little more than passing attention.

"I have for many years believed that a false appreciation of what I call 'subjectivism' has led humanity into more errors than any other single psychological factor."

The last disconnected comment sums up my whole attitude towards the occult, and seems to provide cover for ninety-nine out of every hundred alleged phenomena calling for examination. The hundredth, in these days of relativity, no open-minded critics could exclude.

When one considers that each and every case of reported phenomena appearing to violate the laws of nature can, and do, emanate from minds varying in capacity from recognisable dementia, to the critical and brilliant intellects of such men as Lodge and J. W. Dunne, it is to remark, not how many, but how strangely few of such propositions are offered for solution.

When Bishop Barclay could go so far as a total denial of all objective reality, calling (not unnaturally) upon God to meet the requirements of an apparently substantial universe—and numerous modern idealists give but scant credit to underlying truth—outside the observer's sphere of vision, we mere laymen must be doubly on our guard.

Miss Moberly's Adventure at first looked different, and for a time I was almost deceived. The old familiar tests failed to penetrate the

substance of her unusually well-defended thesis, with its strong claim to objective confirmation. It had to be tackled, literally, on its own ground before it finally yielded.

Without in some way clearing the vast agglomeration of purely subjective experiences from the field of exploitation, I fail to see how scientific researchers are ever to get to grips with problems of this nature.

Whilst waiting in the train at the Gare du Nord after a day at Versailles, I noticed a figure "3", hanging from the station roof. It was a metal device resembling a large stencil and probably referred to the number of the platform. Viewed through the carriage window, which was wet, the figure had in some way become triplicated and looked, at first glance, like "333"? I gazed at it for a time, pondering on the nature of appearances.

If, I reasoned, the figure I can see is 333 and I care to assert it, who can ever truthfully deny me? I should be told, of course, that the refraction of the wet glass was deceiving me. But since, if I were not looking at it through glass, I should be using the lenses of my eyes, a natural transparent media, can I thus, with any more confidence, define its true nature?

Yes. But by the doubtful expedient only of reducing its appearance to a common denominator—that of general opinion and mutual consent, which, in matters of ultimate reality, must in the nature of things be equally unreliable.

I myself happen to suffer from defective colour-vision. I cannot distinguish between certain primary colours, and confidently assert that this and that flower are alike, where you would state with equal certainty that they were entirely different. Both of us cannot be correct, yet it is only because colour-blindness has an incidence of something like seven per cent. of the population, instead of *seventy per cent.*, that for the time being I am "wrong" and you are "right". It is possible to imagine a race or generation where these percentages were reversed. Where, then, would lie objective reality where colours are concerned?

A small boy of my acquaintance recently asked his mother whether he and his father really existed. Or did she think that, perhaps, they were only a part of his own imagination? Out of the mouths . . . !

All this may appear very obvious to intelligent readers, and is as old as the hills, but seems to have a peculiar significance in the present issue. I can never prove the authors of *An Adventure* to have been wrong without impugning their own intellectual honesty, which I think is self-evident. All I can do is to place them outside the majority verdict of the average, say, visitor to Versailles. No one can go further than this.

It seems undeniable, for instance, that St. Paul was visited by a dazzling apparition on the lonely Damascus road, and that certain of the disciples gazed wonderingly at the face of the Resurrected Christ. Christianity itself proves it, if docu-

mentary evidence is insufficient to do so. Every church spire throughout Christendom stands in mute evidence to its undoubted veracity. The best that any critic can do in handling these situations is to prove, if possible, that you or I, had we been there, would have seen no such thing.

Naturally, in drawing conclusions one cannot ignore questions of contemporary temperament, the spirit of the age, contributory influences, etc., though without in any way affecting the main premise.

So much close study of the Trianon mystery, and so long an association with the recorded findings of its authors, had made it strangely difficult at times to realise the ruin I have wrought.

It may be an aspect of the very tendency in human nature on which I base my calculations that it seems well-nigh impossible to perceive the minute residua to which, for me, *The Adventure* has been reduced. An hour at Versailles . . . half an hour's walk through the Queen's exclusive gardens . . . a visit to the house . . . a carriage drive "where all was fresh and natural", thirty-seven years ago !

Who amongst the company of casual visitors that day would ever have anticipated such a sequel? Who would have imagined that the ordinary scenes and persons encountered by many should be destined to immortal fame? Or that the simple experience open to all and sundry of walking through these historic grounds

should give birth to the only serious claim—except one—to the witness of a physical subjective displacement in time?

I have in my possession a letter from an old friend of both the authors, eighty-five years of age, in which she speaks of the suffering and humiliation endured by them as a result of the ridicule and open accusations levelled at them ever since their story was first made public, and of the joy with which, in her old age, Miss Moberly first read the findings of Einstein, whose speculations she felt favoured the acceptance of her visions. To this lady, and others, I can offer just this consolation :

My close acquaintance with *The Adventure*, far from discrediting the character and integrity of its courageous authors, has, on the contrary, endeared them to me in a manner quite unusual in an association of purely academic and retrospective character.

To these brave ladies *The Adventure* was vividly and patently true. If I find truth in its complete negation, then it is indeed the same truth, and honour is satisfied.

That I have destroyed something of great beauty I am only too ready to admit, and it is not without a certain sadness that I accept the penalty inseparable from active scepticism. Yet there are many who would find themselves similarly impelled in like circumstances. It were better surely for mature minds that, where capable of demonstration, the truth should prevail,

however many tender illusions may lie prostrate in its path.

Was it an unworthy sense of thwarted hope, a cynical determination to share my disappointment, which led me to my considerable labour of demolition? I would, I think, do myself injustice were I to leave it at that. Rather would I contemplate the possibility that in seeking to fathom a mystery so well founded I might perchance have wielded some minor tool of reason capable of further use in abler hands than mine.

THE END